THE

Stranger's Grave.

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul. *Hamlet.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The original manuscript from which the following narrative has been compiled, was presented to the Editor, some thirty years ago, by a common friend of his and Mr. Townsend. A short introduction, which forms the ground-work of the first five chapters, is in the hand-writing of the late excellent Vicar (or rather Perpetual Curate, for the living of Wetheral is no more than a Perpetual Curacy) of Wetheral, — whilst the disjointed tale, with which he has taken no other liberty than merely to throw it into language of his own, appears to have been penned by the ill-fated hero himself. The Editor has given it to the public, because he

conceives that in spite of the horrible event upon which it hinges, it may not be useless to the young and the thoughtless; as it will warn them against the encouragement of any passion or propensity, the indulgence of which is in contradiction to the moral law of their Creator.

After this declaration, the reader will not, perhaps, be surprised to learn, that the Editor is somewhat more than a sexagenarian. His age, indeed, falls very little short of the limits assigned by the bard of Sion to our mortal existence; and as he is a bachelor, and has been for the last forty years a sort of wanderer upon the face of the earth, many curious and interesting scraps of private history have necessarily come into his possession. These he has lately taken it into his head to arrange and throw into order; for old

age has at length damped his ardour for travelling, by depriving him of sufficient strength of body to endure its fatigues. But his mind is still active. If, therefore, the following specimen of his discoveries be favourably received by the public, he will not fail, provided life be spared to him, to lay others, from time to time, before it. If otherwise, his papers shall be committed to the flames; and he and they shall perish together, leaving no trace behind them that they ever existed.

London, Oct. 1823.



THE

STRANGER'S GRAVE.

CHAPTER I.

AN ARRIVAL.

There are few situations, even in the romantic county of Cumberland, more strikingly picturesque and beautiful than that in which the village of Wetheral stands. It is built along the side of a hill, from the summit of which a fine and extensive prospect of hill and valley, wood and water, meets the eye; but being itself somewhat beneath the ridge, he who looks forth from amidst its white-washed and unassuming cottages, finds his gaze is compressed within much narrower limits. At the base of this hill, along a channel which seems as if it had been formed by some sudden convulsion of nature, runs the river Eden; not smoothly and quietly

like the rivers of the south, but chafing and roaring from pool to pool, or dashing over the broken ledges of rock, which at innumerable intervals arise to interrupt its progress. The bank upon which Wetheral hangs, is, comparatively, bare of foliage. Somewhat higher up the stream, indeed, the woods thicken on this side as well as on the other; but it is upon the opposite bank, overshadowed with the tall trees for which the grounds of Corby Castle are remarkable, that the eye of the spectator is irresistibly enchained.

The bank upon which Corby Castle stands, rises, like that of Wetheral, to a considerable height above the stream. Here art and nature seem to have done their utmost to produce a scene of unrivalled beauty, and it must be confessed that they have not laboured in vain. The whole face of the hill is covered with the most luxuriant wood, through which are cut narrow winding footpaths, intercepted ever and anon by some tall red rock, or ending in the mouth of a cave hewn out in the side of the cliff. Rich groves descend from the very crown of the hill to the margin of the river, insomuch that the branches of the weeping-willows and other re-

cumbent trees are kept in continual motion by the running of the stream; whilst their order is so admirably irregular, that all appearance of art is entirely kept out of sight. Like other mountain streams, the river Eden is winding in its course. At this place the curve is such as to place the lowermost cottages of Wetheral within a perfect amphitheatre of hills; the high banks closing in both to the right and left, so rapidly as to reduce the whole compass of the prospect within the space of perhaps a mile in length, and little more than a bowshot in breadth. But to the real lover of nature, a scene like this can hardly be too confined. In the rich, wide, fertile, and unbroken plains of the south, such a one feels himself one of the crowd—a being who moves and must continually move under the gaze of the world: but in the narrow glens and vales of the north, he is alone. His eye takes in all of earthly things which it desires to embrace,—the clear glassy stream, the incumbent rock, and the hanging wood; whilst even the blue sky appears more beautiful, because it is not boundless.

The village of Wetheral consists of a church remarkable for its neatness and simplicity; a

vicarage-house close by, embosomed in the shrubs which adorn its paddock and garden; a little inn or public-house, distinguished by the picture of a cart-wheel which dangles from the bough of a tree beside the door, and somewhere about a dozen cottages. These are scattered in irregular order along the hill side, only the church and parsonage crowning the summit.

Many years have passed away since the Reverend William Townsend was vicar of the parish. He was a man respected and beloved by all to whom he was known; his heart literally overflowed with the milk of human kindness; he was pious without being enthusiastic; kind, charitable, and generous even beyond his means; the very father of his little flock, to whom all their cares were communicated, and all their disputes referred. He had been presented to the living when a young man, and became so attached to the situation and the people, that no offer of better preferment (and many were made to him) could ever induce him to change his benefice. "No;" he used to reply when his patron urged him to accept a richer living, "my parish was my bride when

I was young, and now that I am old I will not leave her."

Soon after his appointment to Wetheral, Mr. Townsend united his fate to that of an amiable woman, who, in due course of time, made him the father of five children. Of these the two elder were girls, the three younger boys; and in the midst of this quiet domestic circle Time flew over the good vicar's head as little noted as Time always flies, when his course is marked only by contentment and virtue. His wishes exceeded not his means, his wife was affectionate and true, and his children were obedient and amiable; nor did he for the space of nearly twenty years know what it was to shed one tear of sorrow on his own account.

Charlotte Townsend, the eldest of his children, had attained the age of eighteen, before any proof of the instability of human happiness was presented to the vicar and his family. Such proof came, however, at length. Two of his sons, who were at school at Carlisle, were attacked with typhus fever, and were removed to their paternal abode to die. The complaint was communicated to their mother, who quitted not their sick-beds by day or night, and such

was its violence, that in the space of one short week after their funeral she followed them to the grave.

As my narrative relates not the affairs of Mr. Townsend or his family, it were needless to waste time by dwelling at length upon the occurrence just noticed. It is sufficient to observe that the blow was deeply felt by him on whom it fell, and that though he bore it in silence, and with all that pious resignation to the will of God for which he was remarkable, many months elapsed before his cheerfulness in any degree returned. With respect to the other members of his family, the girls were at that age when grief, however poignant at the moment, cannot be expected to last long; whilst little William, who had barely completed his sixth year, was too young to be affected, otherwise than as the melancholy pomp of a funeral always affects a child. Occasionally, indeed, during the first few succeeding weeks, he would ask when mamma and his brothers would return; but the visits which his father and sisters paid to the three green mounds in the churchyard were to him mysterious and unmeaning.

Two years had elapsed since the death of

Mrs. Townsend, and the family at the vicarage were beginning to recover their former tone of mind, when their attention was roused, and roused uneasily, by an event, at that period very uncommon in the village of Wetheral. The event to which I allude, was the sudden arrival at the Wheel of a Stranger of whom nobody knew any thing, and about whom the postilion who drove his chaise could give no other account than that he had reached Carlisle the night before by the public stage-coach from London. What had brought him to Wetheral, how long he intended to remain, whether he had any business there, and even what was his name, all the curiosity of the villagers was unable to discover. The stock of apparel which he brought with him, lay enclosed within a single portmanteau of moderate size, and though sufficient for the uses of a wayfaring man, seemed hardly competent to supply the demands of one who sought a permanent abode; while his sole travelling companion was a small brown and white spaniel, which never quitted his presence by day or by night.

As he neither gave, nor pretended to give, any account of himself, assuming to himself

neither name nor title; as he spoke not of departing, nor hinted at the probable period of his sojourn, it is not surprising that he was regarded by the inhabitants of the ale-house with something of a suspicious eye. And it must be confessed, that there was about the Stranger a great deal well-calculated to rouse, if not the suspicion, at least the curiosity of ignorant Cumbrian peasants. He was silent, gloomy, and reserved; he never spoke even to his landlady, except for the purpose of issuing some necessary order; he eat scarcely any thing; and in the mornings it was generally found that his bed had not been occupied. Habits such as these, so totally different from any thing to which she had been accustomed, could not fail to startle and alarm Dame Goodban: but the Dame was kind-hearted as well as prudent; and "seeing," to use her own expression, "the gentleman paid as a gentleman should, why, it was no business of hers whether he used her bed and eat her victuals or not."

The Stranger had arrived at the Wheel on the evening of Wednesday, and though the rolling of a post-chaise past the paddock-gate excited for an instant the curiosity of the Misses

Townsend, still they thought of it no more, but concluded that some visitors to the Castle had preferred crossing at the ferry, to going round by Warwick and the bridge. Mr. Townsend, likewise, chanced that week to be much at Carlisle, on business, consequently the singular event remained a secret to the inhabitants of the vicarage till the Sunday; but on that day the tale was communicated, accompanied by all the embellishments which the peculiar phraseology of Peter the parish clerk, was capable of shedding over it.

Mr. Townsend had scarcely entered the vestry-room before he discovered by the expression of Peter's countenance that something had occurred of which he was ignorant, and which it probably behoved him to know. "What is the matter, Peter," said he, as he put on his surplice; "has any thing happened in the village, any accident, or what is worse, any crime been committed in my absence?"

"No, please your Reverence," answered Peter, "nought at all as I know of; our fouks are au about their ordinary.—But has your Reverence seen the gentleman?"

"What gentleman, Peter?"

"Why, the gentleman, please your Reverence, as coomed on Wednesday night to the Wheel."

"A gentleman came to the Wheel last Wednesday, did you say? Who is he? what does he want? is he alone? He is some traveller, I suppose; — but it is a long sojourn to make from Wednesday to Sunday in a lonely village like this."

"So it is, your Reverence, and you see as how that is just what we was a thinking. But troth, Dame Goodban gives but a queer account of him."

"Why, what account does she give, Peter?"

"She says, your Reverence, and so say all the fouk, that he must be possessed; and that he has brought an evil spirit with him in the shape of a little dog, — and, I had a mind to coom over to Carlisle to tell your Reverence, because I was afeard that it might bring sin and misfortune into the parish; and you know, when your Reverence is absent, I counts myself responsible." (Peter was the village school-master, as well as parish clerk.)

The vicar smiled and was silent. Not so Peter, for having fairly given his tongue its

liberty, he felt by no means disposed to restrain it too suddenly, particularly when a subject existed on which it might exercise itself so well. — "You see, your Reverence," continued he, "the gentleman, as Dame Goodban calls him; — but, for my part, I think he is no gentleman, but mayhap a murderer, or a warlock, — though he is but young too for that, for he cannot be above five-and-twenty, — and is not that too young for a warlock, your Reverence?"

"I think it is, Peter."

"Well, your Reverence, the gentleman is so queer and so strange, he never speaks to a body at all, except to his dog, and Dame Goodban says, the dog speaks to him; for when she peeped through the key-hole, last night at twelve o'clock, when your Reverence was in bed, as every honest man should be, — there she saw him with the candle burning blue, and he was walking up and down the room, and every now and then he beat his breast and his forehead, — and he gave such sighs and groans, and looked at the dog, and the dog looked at him, — and then he sat down in the great arm-chair that stands again the fire-place; — you remember

that chair with the worked cover, Sir, that your Reverence sits in on tithe day?"

"Perfectly, Peter."

"Well, he sat down in that chair, and the dog, without his saying a word, went and jumped upon his knee, and licked his face; and he said, "Poor, poor Flora, you are all that is left to me now!" and Flora said, "Yes," or something very like it,—and then he threw his arms about the brute's neck and kissed it, and wept and blubbered over it, for all the world as if it had been a human creature. Now what do you think of that, your Reverence, is not that very shocking?"

"It is at least strange, Peter; but we shall talk more about it when service is at an end, for I see the time is past."

With great reluctance Peter helped his master to tie the string of his band, and threw open the vestry-door; and with still greater regret beheld the vicar walk leisurely to the reading-desk. But there was no help for it, and Peter accordingly compelled himself to stifle his desire of talking, further than the rubric permitted, for a complete hour and a half; a trial of patience by no means slight, or less

worthy of notice from the ecclesiastical historian, than many of the self-inflicted torments of the bundling martyrs of the seventh century.

Though Mr. Townsend was perfectly aware of the disposition to make much out of little, for which the inhabitants of a Cumbrian village then were and still are distinguished, the story which Peter had told him made nevertheless so great an impression upon his mind, that he mounted the steps of the desk with thoughts unusually distracted. But if they could not help wandering to sublunary things, in consequence of the gossip of his clerk, much more were they clogged in their efforts to fix themselves where they ought to have been fixed, by the entrance into the church of the fearful Stranger himself. The vicar had just begun the exhortation, when the western door of the edifice was thrown open, and a young man advanced into the aisle, upon whom the eyes of the whole congregation were instantly turned; even the little children, whom their mothers had for the first time brought with them to church, clambered up the sides of the pews to have a peep at him, whilst a sort of murmur ran through the building, indicative of questions asked and information conveyed.

The attention of Mr. Townsend was drawn by all this to the intruder, and from his appearance and manner he was at no loss in guessing that this must be no other than the mysterious lodger at the Wheel. He beheld before him a young man, evidently not more than two or three and twenty years of age, of an expression of countenance singularly melancholy and dejected. His pale and hollow cheek, his sunken eye and protruding forehead, and above all, a something about his mouth, of which no words can convey an adequate notion, told much more plainly than language could speak it, that the Stranger, though young in years was old in misery. His dark and curly hair was worn bare at the temples, as if sorrow had prematurely thinned a crop, once singularly rich and abundant. He was rather above than below the middle stature. His form was slender, but well-proportioned, — though little now remained of it except its shadow; — it is probable, indeed, that he had once been handsome, but grief, which could not deprive him of the air of a thorough gentleman, had completely effaced his beauty. His dress was a blue frock, such as was usually worn in those days by officers out

of uniform; indeed his whole deportment was that of a military man, at a distance from the regiment to which he belonged.

It is not to be wondered at if the sight of such an apparition, connected as it was with the story to which he had just been listening, almost entirely drew off the attention of the vicar from the business in which he was employed. He has himself confessed, indeed, that he never went through the church service, either before or since, with so little pleasure, nor felt a greater degree of relief when it came to an end. For it was not the Stranger's appearance alone which distracted his thoughts. His manner during prayers was as novel as it was attractive. There was about him no seeming affectation, nothing indicating a desire to draw towards himself the notice of others; but a depth and even bitterness of devotion, which the vicar had never before seen equalled. Whilst the congregation were repeating the general confession, Mr. Townsend, whose elevated situation gave him a commanding peep into the pew where the Stranger sat, could perceive very plainly an involuntary shudder per-

vade his whole frame. He saw, too, the impassioned clasping of his hands beneath the book-board, whilst the face buried in the book itself, and the *amen* pronounced in no higher tone than a whisper, evidently proved that nothing was done for the sake of effect. From all this the good vicar instantly conceived the notion that the poor youth before him was labouring under some severe mental affliction; nor could he conceal from himself the conviction which he harboured, that that sorrow was the offspring of a wounded conscience.

When the service was over, the rest of the congregation, as their custom was, stood still in their pews till their pastor should have saluted such of them as were near, and passed on to his robing-room; but the Stranger instantly quitted the church. He spoke to no one, he looked not so much as around, but with a hurried and seemingly a troubled step, he departed through the door by which he had entered. The eyes of all, including those of the vicar himself, and of his daughters, followed him as he went, and even rested for an instant, apparently without any act of volition,

upon the space through which he had disappeared. That day Mr. Townsend addressed no one. He walked forward without speaking, to the vestry, and such was the impression made upon his flock by the coming and going of the Stranger, that this breach in his usual custom passed unnoticed.

"Who is that stranger, sir?" said his eldest daughter, as she entered the vestry-room.

"I know not, my dear, any more than you do."

"I never saw any one more deeply devout," rejoined Elizabeth.

"Nor did I," replied the vicar.

Peter now gladly interfered, and was proceeding to repeat to the young ladies all that he had previously stated to their father, when the vicar interrupted him, and commanded him to be silent. "Lack-a-day, sir," cried Peter, "your Reverence seems glamoured with his evil eye. I never saw you so before."

"Peter," said Mr. Townsend, "let us have done with this foolish prattle. I will myself call at the Wheel, and find out who this young man is; and till I have done so I desire to hear no more idle stories."

Peter bowed, for the order was peremptory; and his robes being laid aside, and carefully put by in the table-drawer, Mr. Townsend took his daughters each under an arm, and returned to the vicarage.

CHAP. II.

AN INTRODUCTION.

I BEG to assure my readers, both male and female, that the Misses Townsend possessed no more of the romantic and sentimental than invariably attaches to all young ladies whose age exceeds fourteen, and has not past beyond five and twenty; whilst in the entire composition of the good vicar there existed not a single particle of either quality; yet truth compels me to acknowledge, that during the remainder of that day, and for several hours of the night, the young Stranger occupied the chief share in their thoughts, and formed the sole subject of their conversation. That he was the most interesting person they had ever beheld, both ladies agreed in admitting; that he was young and handsome, none of the party could deny; and that something pressed upon his mind was conjectured by father as well as daughters, though they materially differed in their notions as to the probable cause of his sorrow. According to the theory of the latter, a theory

gathered from such novels and poems as they had been permitted to read, he exhibited manifest symptoms of love, and of love unfortunate in its issue; according to the judgment of the former, a judgment founded upon the basis of strong natural sense, and considerable acquaintance with mankind, he laboured under the most afflicting of all maladies, an evil conscience. Be this, however, as it may, it was perfectly perceptible that he was unhappy, and thence it was unanimously voted that he stood greatly in need of some friend and adviser.

Mr. Townsend was in his heart the friend of all mankind, and towards every individual who dwelt within the bounds of his parish, he regarded himself in the light of a natural father. To resolve that no time should be lost in seeking the Stranger's acquaintance, was, with him, therefore, the work of a moment; and so eager was he to carry his resolution into force, that he was up next morning and stirring with the cock. But just as he was preparing to set out on his walk towards the Wheel, it occurred to him that very possibly the Stranger might not be accustomed to receive visits at five o'clock in the morning; and he accordingly laid so much

restraint upon his inclinations, as to delay executing his design for no less than four hours. Beyond the hour of nine, however, his impatience could not be restrained, and exactly at five minutes past that hour by the village clock, he lifted the latch of the ale-house door, and entered the kitchen.

"You have got a lodger in your house, dame," said he to the landlady, who received him with her most gracious smile and best courtesy; "I have come to call upon him,—will you show me to his room?"

"Please, your Reverence, the gentleman is not within. He has been gone out ever since day-break, and there his breakfast has stood waiting him these two hours. But lack-a-day, that don't much matter, for, poor youth, he wo'n't eat it when he does come home,—he will only give it to his dog."

"I am sorry to hear it," said the vicar, "as I fear he is in bad health. But don't you know his name?"

"No, your Reverence; we always calls him the gentleman. And I am sure your Reverence is right: he must be very ill, very ill indeed, sir, for he neither eats, nor drinks, nor sleeps,

nor talks, no does any thing as any other body does. At first I thought he must be a very bad man, and guessed as how that his little dog, which your Reverence mayhap has heard talk about, must be the devil — God save us! but I don't think so now. For though he be shy, like, he is as gentle as a lamb, and never gives a body a cross word, and pays for every thing like a gentleman, for all he don't eat. I am glad your Reverence has come to see him, for I am sure he will be the better for your good words."

The landlady had by this time conducted Mr. Townsend into a small parlour up stairs, which had been fitted up, as she informed him, at the Stranger's request; and together with a bed-room adjoining, assigned exclusively to his use. It was of course plainly furnished, but Dame Goodban assured the vicar that her lodger was perfectly satisfied with it, and that he told her he required nothing more, except that he should be as little disturbed as possible.

"Your guest is probably ill in mind as well as body," observed the vicar. "I think Peter told me that he spends whole nights in walking up and down his apartment."

"It is very true, sir, quite true indeed. Why, there was last night again, no further gone, I heard him walking backwards and forwards in this very room till long past midnight. And I just got out of bed and slipped to the key-hole, and there I saw him holding a locket or picture, or some such thing, in his hand; and he gazed upon it, and spoke to it, and kissed it; and then he thrust it into his bosom and began to talk to Flora his little dog for all the world as if she was a natural creature. And the dog whined and licked his hand, and I could not stand it myself, your Reverence, and I cried too; as I can't help it, sir, to see a young gentleman so distressed."

Here the good landlady put her apron to her eyes and wiped away the tears which began to roll rapidly over her cheeks. But she was interrupted in her endeavours to convey further information, for when her fit of sympathy had passed off, she looked to the windows, and observed that the subject of their conversation was approaching. Upon this she abruptly quitted the apartment, and left the vicar for a moment to his own meditations.

That moment was spent by Mr. Townsend in

a vain attempt to arrange some plan by which the Stranger's wounded heart might be probed, without the appearance of impertinent curiosity on the part of the physician; but long before the introductory harangue was composed, the vicar's methodical ideas were scattered into chaos by the opening of the door, and the entrance of the Stranger. On beholding his visitor he paused for an instant, evidently embarrassed, and perhaps displeased; but the shadow of the latter feeling passed away from his countenance as speedily as it came, and with a smile, melancholy but most pleasing, he made his reverence and salutation.

"The clergyman of the parish, I believe," said he, pointing to a seat; "at least the gentleman who officiated yesterday?"

"The same," replied Mr. Townsend, "and as such I have taken the liberty of waiting upon you. You are a stranger in these parts and may perhaps stand in need of a guide; can I be of use to you?"

"As yet I am a stranger," rejoined the unknown, "but before long I shall lose my claim to that title; and I would rather be my own guide," smiling again, "than have the beauties of

such a place as this pointed out by another. But I thank you for your kind offer."

"Then you intend to make some stay amongst us. I fear the accommodations of this poor inn are but ill suited to your evidently delicate state of health. We cannot boast of many luxuries in the vicarage, but we have abundant comforts, and some to spare. We must endeavour to make your lodgings more habitable."

"You are very good, sir," replied the Stranger, "but I will not abuse your goodness. This house contains all that I require, or probably shall require, during my stay."

The melancholy languor of the young man's countenance, feebly lighted up as it was by the smile which occasionally pervaded it, the soft sweet tone of his voice, and the frankness with which his offers were listened to, though declined, soon dissipated any degree of restraint with which Mr. Townsend might have been hitherto embarrassed, and caused him to plunge at once with openness, and yet with delicacy, into the real purport of his visit.

"Young man," he said, "you must pardon the candour with which I address you, because

it springs from an unaffected interest in your fate. You have come amongst us suddenly, not to say suspiciously; of your kindred and connections, nay, even of your name, we are ignorant; and from your general deportment, it is evident, that some mystery hangs over you. Believe me, that I do not wish impertinently to pry into secrets which you may desire to keep inviolate; but if the advice and assistance of an old man can be of the smallest service to yòu, you may command them."

The Stranger was silent for some minutes, and kept his eyes rivetted on the ground. At length he raised them, and with the same mildness of expression which had hitherto distinguished him, calmly, but in a tone of firmness, replied, —

"I perfectly understand, sir, the object of your discourse, and I sincerely thank you for the generosity of your intentions: but I cannot at present avail myself of them. I have come hither, I confess, strangely; but it is simply because all places are alike to me. I heard accidentally of the beauty of your village when I was at Carlisle, I find it equal to my expectations, and I have determined to continue its

inhabitant till the scene palls upon me. With respect to my name, you may call me" — here he paused again, and a blush tinged his cheeks — "you may call me," repeating the words, "Stanley; but of my kindred and connections you can know nothing."

The tone of voice in which the above was delivered differed in a very trifling degree from that which had marked his previous conversation, but that difference, slight as it was, was sufficient to convince the Vicar, that all further pressing on the subject would be impertinent and offensive. To slide at once, however, into some common-place subject of discourse was not easy, and therefore a pause of several minutes occurred, during which the two gentlemen neither spoke nor looked at each other. Mr. Townsend at length broke the silence by asking, "Are you a military man, sir?"

"I have been," was the laconic reply.

"Are you fond of reading? — I possess a tolerable library, which you will oblige me by using."

"My book, sir, is one which lies within the reach of all men. Nature is the only volume

which I now study, and I learn the most important truths from her."

"But you are evidently disposed to be religious. Would you not be benefited by perusing the works of some of our old and best divines?"

"I venerate these great men as much as they deserve to be venerated, and there was a time when, perhaps, I would have eagerly grasped at the opportunity of making myself intimately acquainted with their writings; but that time is past." Here the Stranger's voice underwent a change in its tone, by no means pleasing to the ear of his auditor. "My religion is now — no matter — no matter—"

Mr. Townsend was silent. He was unwilling again to touch a key which clearly vibrated in discord, and yet he felt as if his duty required that a subject so important should not drop thus all at once. A moment's reflection, however, convinced him, that his wisest course would be, to become intimately acquainted with Mr. Stanley, before he combated any of his prejudices, or entered into controversy with him; and therefore he changed the subject by observing, somewhat abruptly, "You are a sportsman, I presume. Is your dog a good one?"

At these words another change came over the countenance of the Stranger, more expressive of mental agony than any which it had yet presented. His eye turned towards the little animal, which had not withdrawn her's from his face during the whole of the conversation, and struggling to overcome some violent passion, he answered in a tremulous tone, "I am no sportsman now. I am nothing that I once was. My dog follows me from habit, and I keep her — because I am attached to her."

It seemed as if the faithful creature had understood all that her master was saying, for she immediately leaped upon his knee, and began to lick his face. "Down, Flora, — down, poor brute!" cried he, gently pushing her from him; and the dog again lay down at his feet.

Mr. Townsend could bear all this no longer. His offers of friendship had been rejected, if not misinterpreted; the Stranger had refused to answer any of the questions which were put to him; it was at least doubtful whether his principles of religion or morality were sound; in short, appearances were greatly against him. But in the mind of Mr. Townsend, appearances of unworthiness, however strong, were incapable

of operating against the dictates of charity and compassion; and he rose to take his leave, even more anxious to do a kindness to his new acquaintance than when he first entered the apartment. The young man rose at the same moment, and bowed as if bidding him farewell, when Mr. Townsend suddenly grasped his hand, and in a voice tremulous with emotion, exclaimed—

"Mr. Stanley, you have received me with less openness than I had hoped that you would have shown towards me; but as yet we are little acquainted. The time may perhaps come when you will esteem me worthy of your confidence. God is my witness, that I have had no other object in view in making this visit, than the hope of being able to administer balm to a spirit, which too clearly gives proof that it is wounded. This you will not suffer me to do, because, whilst I am ignorant of the sources of your affliction, it is, of course, impossible that I can hope to dry it up. But I again repeat, that if there be any thing within my power to offer, which you so much as fancy may be of use to you, you cannot oblige me more than by stating it. Come to the vicarage whenever it

may suit you. Our fare is frugal, but to such as it is you are welcome, and you will at least find there the benefit of a little society, somewhat more civilized than this house can furnish. God bless you, young man, and shed over your lacerated mind the healing of his grace and holy spirit."

When Mr. Townsend first seized the hand of the Stranger, the latter looked as if he would have taken offence at the liberty; but the good Vicar had not got through half of his harangue, before the glance of hauteur faded from his pale and interesting countenance. He squeezed the hand which held his, and, bending over it, murmured, rather than spoke, the gratitude which he really felt towards the benevolent speaker. But he did no more. He accepted no offer, nor made any promise that he would return the call, but again pressing the good man's hand, wished him good morning, and shut the door.

CHAP. III.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

MORTIFIED and disappointed at the bad success of his visit, Mr. Townsend took the road homewards in a very moody turn of mind. He could by no means account to himself for the degree of interest which he had involuntarily assumed in the affairs of this Stranger, for he was perfectly conscious that that interest was of no common kind. In vain did he endeavour to reason himself into a belief that the object of his anxiety must be altogether undeserving of regard: in vain did he recall to his recollection the more than suspicious expressions which fell from him, when the topic of religion was introduced into their conversation; the mystery in which he evidently desired to shroud himself; and the singularly reserved and forbidding tenor of his general habits. Though he freely acknowledged that all these told greatly against Stanley, his reasoning was nevertheless summed up by a resolution to keep his judgment sus-

pended, and to be guided in its formation by such circumstances as might chance to occur in the course of their future acquaintance.

It will be readily imagined that Mr. Townsend was met at the very wicket by his daughters, whose curiosity had been wound up to a degree positively painful, by the continued length of his absence. To enumerate the various questions which were put to him, all in a breath, is a task to which I doubt, whether any historian be competent. Who is the youth? Is he a great personage in disguise? Is he a rebel in hiding? What is the cause of his melancholy? Has he promised to come to the vicarage?—All these interrogatories, and a thousand more, were poured into each of the good Vicar's ears, during the few seconds which were expended in walking across the lawn before the door; but to none of them could a satisfactory reply be given. The conversation which had passed between himself and the Stranger, or rather the substance of it, was indeed detailed; but its detail gave as little satisfaction to the young ladies as its original occurrence had given to their father. The whole party, in short, entered the vicarage disappointed, and somewhat

out of humour; nor could they rid themselves of the uneasy feeling during the remainder of the day.

"I think it is quite impossible that the Stranger can be so rude as not to return your visit," said Elizabeth to her father, as they sat at breakfast next morning.

"I hope he will return it for his own sake," replied the Vicar. — "Poor youth! I wish he would receive comfort."

"I wish so too," rejoined Elizabeth. "I wonder if he be fond of music."

I know not by what impulse she was guided, but the young lady rose as she uttered the last words, and sat down to her harpsichord. The knowledge of music possessed by the daughters of a humble Vicar was, in those days, trifling: but Elizabeth's natural taste was good, and she sang and played a wild Scotch air with peculiar sweetness. Her voice was rich and mellow, and she poured forth on this occasion an air remarkable for its pathetic touchingness — a song of the borders, "Braw, braw Lads of Galla Water." She had finished two stanzas, when her sister, who sat beside the opened window, suddenly exclaimed, "See, here is the Stranger!

he is listening to your song;" and sure enough so he was. He stood behind the hedge which skirted the paddock in the attitude of one entranced: his head was a little bent to one side; his eyes cast upwards, and his mouth half open. At first, the expression of his countenance was that of pleasure, mixed with melancholy, but it gradually became more and more gloomy, till at last the very shadows of despair hung over it. He darted a glance of fire towards the apartment from which the soft tones issued, and striking his forehead violently with his clenched fist, rushed down the hill, and was lost to the view of the party.

If the interest and curiosity of the Vicar's family had been excited before, it was now roused to a degree infinitely more intolerable. The girls could not refrain themselves, but shed tears; and as to Mr. Townsend, after taking one or two turns across the room, he snatched up his hat, and set out in pursuit of Stanley. But he returned, in half an hour, without having found him; and, for that day at least, did his best to forget him.

The whole of this week elapsed, and Stanley came not to the vicarage. Mr. Townsend

was unwilling to force himself upon any one; but he resolved that at least one more attempt should be made to shed peace over the troubled spirit of the Stranger, and he accordingly prepared a sermon, against next Sabbath, on the subject of God's mercies, in the expectation that Stanley would again form part of his congregation. Nor was he disappointed in this expectation: the youth came as he had come before: he occupied the same pew which he had formerly filled; his manner, in no respect, differed from what it had been on the previous Sabbath, and he was peculiarly attentive to the discourse. The Misses Townsend, indeed, who appeared to have watched the Stranger's face more narrowly than that of their father, reported, that during the whole of its continuance he never once withdrew his eyes from the preacher; — that, occasionally, a flush of satisfaction spread itself over his pallid cheek, when the infinite goodness of the Creator was dwelt upon; but that towards the close he shook his head, in seeming token of dissent from its general conclusion. Mr. Townsend had this day given notice of the sacrament for the Sunday following, and he closed his discourse by en-

treating all who were truly penitent to appear before the altar. It was to this part of his doctrine that the young man appeared to object.

Having waited two days more in the hope of receiving a visit from Stanley, Mr. Townsend again, on the Wednesday morning, set out for the Wheel. But the youth was from home; he had taken a fishing rod with him, and it was doubtful when he would return. Mr. Townsend was pleased to hear that he had acquired a relish for any innocent amusement; and having ascertained that he had gone up the stream in the direction of Cairn Brig, he directed his own steps thither in pursuit of him.

Mr. Townsend followed the pathway which leads along the bank-side, and past the grotto, or cell, once sacred as the abode of an anchorite. He was thus a good deal concealed by the foliage, although many openings in the wood afforded an opportunity of viewing the course of the river and the opposite bank; and having proceeded about half a mile towards Cairn Brig, the object of his search unexpectedly presented himself to his gaze. The rod which he had carried with him from the Wheel lay carelessly on a rock beside him; — he himself was extended at

full length on the opposite margin of the river; his faithful spaniel rested her head upon his leg, and a large weeping willow shed over him the shelter of its branches. About twenty yards above where he was lying the river fell from a ledge of rock, an height just sufficient to produce a considerable quantity of white foam, and to occasion so much noise and tumult as to drown every other sound.

Mr. Townsend felt his heart sink within him at the spectacle. He had flattered himself, with a degree of natural and pardonable vanity, that his discourse on the preceding Sabbath had not been wasted, and that the young Stranger was already beginning to give evidence to its force, — and all this because the landlady at the Wheel had informed him, that her lodger was gone up the river with a fishing rod in his hand. But the rod was not so much as untied or put together, whilst the attitude of woe in which its bearer lay, plainly indicated that it had been carried out only as a pretence, or rather as the symbol of excuse for a lonely stroll along the river.

There were two reasons which induced Mr. Townsend to do a deed which he had never

done before, and for the perpetration of which his own mind did not leave him unaccused, —I mean, to sit down and watch the object of his anxiety. In the first place, it was not possible for him to cross the stream without alarming the Stranger, and probably scaring him away; in the next place, he was anxious to obtain a clue, by which, perhaps, his kind intentions towards Stanley might be guided. Seating himself, therefore, under the shade of a few tall trees, he kept his eyes fixed with melancholy eagerness upon the little group before him.

He had hardly taken his station, when Stanley, who had hitherto lain flat on his face, his hat thrown aside, and his forehead resting upon the palms of both hands, raised himself upon one elbow, and casting to heaven a look, — such a look, as even the soul of painting could hardly hope to represent, —smote upon his breast. The little dog instantly rose, and came creeping towards her master's arms, she licked his face, and gently wagged her tail as if fearful of exhibiting too much demonstration of joy. But the action was not lost upon him: Mr. Townsend could perceive his lips move, though he was unable to catch the sound of what was uttered, as he threw

his arms round the dog's neck, and pressed his cheek to her face. He next undid two or three buttons of his waistcoat, and pulling out what appeared to be a glass locket, suspended by a black ribbon round his neck, gazed at it intensely, kissed it with fervor again and again, and, replacing it in his bosom, arose from the earth. He lifted his hat and rod, whilst Mr. Townsend vainly endeavoured to make himself heard; but his shouts were drowned by the noise of the water-fall, and when he had struggled his way through the brushwood to the river's brink, Stanley and his dog were gone.

Once more, then, the good Vicar retraced his steps homewards. He had given especial directions to Dame Goodban, that Mr. Stanley should be informed of his visit; and he had nothing now to trust to, for bringing the Stranger and himself together, except the young man's sense of propriety, or, failing that, some accidental and fortunate rencounter.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday passed away without conducting the wished-for visitor to the vicarage. He was now spoken of however by all the parishioners, as a young man more to be pitied than dreaded. According to his land-

lady's account, he was all gentleness and goodness, fearful of giving trouble, and punctual in his payments; but, poor youth! it grieved her very heart to see that he neither eat nor slept. The currant jellies and marmalades, and other preserves, which the Misses Townsend had sent for his use, were all untasted. Calvesfoot jelly was made in vain, for he would not touch it; and even his regular meals were so little partaken of, that it perfectly astonished her how the poor gentleman subsisted. But it was not alone the continued absence of the Stranger which distressed Mr. Townsend; he observed, with regret, that his daughter Elizabeth (who was just eighteen) had of late greatly changed in her manner. Instead of the lively light-hearted girl she was wont to be, she had become melancholy and silent, loving to be alone, and addicted to solitary walks along the river. She was much at the window, likewise, which looked in the direction of the stream, and became every day more and more devoted to Scottish music. But in all her rambles she hardly ever met the Stranger; if she did, he only saluted her with a bow, and passed on with as much haste as if he had met an evil spirit.

Not that there was about Elizabeth Townsend any thing in air or figure at all resembling the ideal pictures which we form to ourselves of the inhabitants of Pandemonium. Quite the reverse. Without being a perfect beauty, she was such a girl as no young man could regard with indifference, whose affections were not already engaged, or withered up and decayed. Her complexion was fair, her hair light auburn, her eyes dark blue, and her features regular; her natural expression was that of liveliness, and even good-humoured wit; and her figure was as light and active as a fawn. Her sister, who was two years older, was of a graver turn of mind, and though certainly not plain, was at least less good looking than Elizabeth.

I have said that the whole of this second week glided past, and Mr. Stanley came not to Mr. Townsend's. Sunday at length arrived, and brought the Stranger as usual to church. The service passed, the unconfirmed and non-communicants retired, and Mr. Townsend proceeded to the altar. He saw with pleasure that the Stranger sat still.—The patten, as usual, was carried round for the offertory, the prayer for the whole state of Christ's church was read;

still the Stranger remained in his pew. But when Mr. Townsend began the introductory address or exhortation to communicants, Stanley half rose from his knees, and looked him full in the face. The Vicar observed his motion, and it confused him. He read on, however, without pausing; but, whether it was from the agitation produced by the young man's attitude, or from any other cause, is doubtful, but instead of reading, as he was accustomed to read, "eateth and drinketh to himself *condemnation*," he pronounced, as our form of exhortation has it, the word *damnation.* It seemed as if this were the very test for which the young Stranger had waited. Hardly was the word pronounced, when he sprang abruptly on his feet, and catching up his hat, which stood on the book board before him, he hurried out of the church.

Mr. Townsend felt so shocked at his abrupt departure, that it was with the utmost difficulty he was able to continue the service. Nor was the circumstance lost upon the congregation: they drew towards the altar with faces in which the expressions of fear and surprize mingled with the more serious cast of devotion, and received the body and blood of Christ with much

more than an usual degree of awe and reverence. The solemn service passed on, however, without interruption, and minister and people returned to their own homes, to pray, not only for themselves, but for the Stranger.

CHAP. IV.

AN ADVENTURE.

The Stranger arrived at Wetheral in the latter end of June, and till the return of the Christmas holidays all Mr. Townsend's attempts to draw him into an acquaintance had been made in vain. He met him repeatedly in his walks, and saw him constantly in church; but on these occasions it was very evident that he sought to avoid, rather than courted notice. His converse never exceeded the passing salutations of the day, and when he could escape with a bow or smile of recognition, it appeared a relief to him. But Mr. Townsend saw with unfeigned regret, that the young man's health was rapidly decaying under the influence of sorrow. When he came, he was so thin, that the good Vicar imagined that he had never beheld a moving person more wasted; but now, he looked like a walking skeleton. His fleshless cheeks were, at the same time, overspread with a brilliant hectic flush, which, though it encreased his beauty,

told plainly that his days were numbered; and the short feeble cough which ever and anon shook his frame, indicated, to use a scriptural phrase, "that there was no sound part in his body."

But grieved as the Vicar was for the young Stranger, he was afflicted by another sorrow much more poignant, because coming more home to his own business and bosom. His daughter Elizabeth faded too, though in a degree less rapid than Stanley. She had never exchanged a single syllable with the young man, nothing had ever passed between them, beyond the civilities of a bow, and yet—why should the truth be concealed—she loved him even to the breaking of her heart. Mr. Townsend was not, at any period of his life, very much given to the yielding softness of sentimentality, and what little of that quality might have formerly lighted up his constitution, the damps of age had long ago chilled and destroyed; but he knew enough of the female heart, to be aware, that a girl of eighteen may very easily love a youth of two and twenty; and that the passion is not likely to be the less violent, because the said youth is evidently hastening to an untimely

grave. Still he hoped that his daughter would overcome the propensity, when its object should be no longer before her eyes; and he accordingly determined to send her on a visit to her aunt at Penrith, as soon as she should have shaken hands with little William, who was every day expected home from school.

The Christmas vacation at length arrived, and brought with it a degree of frost so severe as is seldom witnessed in this narrow part of the island. The Eden was speedily frozen across, at least in those deep pools where the water is quiet, and even the restless waterfalls exhibited the appearance of so many icicles, dropping moisture, like the hair on the head of the famous Achelous, when in his bull's form he presented himself as a suitor before Dejanira. All the youths of the village, as is usual on such occasions, immediately took to their skaits, and every linn was daily covered with curlers, and skaiters, and sliders, as the humour or skill of each performer directed him to an occupation. Foremost among the most venturous of these was William Townsend; and exactly in places where others were afraid to trust themselves, there was he sure invariably to be seen.

The day was now fixed for Elizabeth's departure, and that day was the morrow. There had been a considerable thaw during the preceding night, but still the ice looked strong and sound, and the crowd upon the pools was not less than had been before. Mr. Townsend and his daughters walked down to the river-side, in order to enjoy the lively scene which its stiffened waters presented, and to witness the performance of William upon his skaits, of which they had heard not a little, both from his companions and himself. As the frost had again set in, no thought was taken of the thaw of the night past, and William rushed forward, as usual, to the very spot where, if the ice was to give way at all, it could not fail to separate. The consequence may be guessed. The ice broke beneath him, and in an instant he was plunged into a pool, nearly twenty feet in depth. The villagers instantly ran in a body towards the place where they saw him struggling to support himself, and grasping at the ice which continually gave way before his hold; but the pressure of the multitude was too great, and the whole sheet groaned and cracked as if it would shiver into a thousand pieces. The

fearful crowd instantly dispersed, leaving the boy to his fate, and dragged with them by main force the anxious father, who had obeyed the same impulse which animated the rest, and sprang to the assistance of his son. Some now ran for ropes, whilst others held fast the struggling Vicar, and one or two encouraged the boy to hold on, though it was perfectly evident that his strength was exhausted, and that long before the ropes could arrive, he would be carried by the current beneath the ice.

At this moment, when his hands were gradually relaxing their hold, and he had already uttered his last feeble cry for help, Mr. Stanley rushed from a thicket on the opposite bank, and without a moment's hesitation made towards him. He heeded not the cracking or bending of the insecure element on which he trod, but in less time than the speed of thought, was at the boy's side, and had seized him by the collar of the coat, just as the piece of ice, on which he himself stood, gave way. Both man and boy were therefore plunged into the water, and little Flora, who had faithfully followed her master, disappeared. Though Stanley's strength was now not great, it seemed as if on the present

occasion he had been endowed with a vigour supernatural; for he not only contrived to keep himself above water, but holding William's coat in his right hand, he supported him at the same time, when he was no longer able to support himself. The ropes at length arrived, and were thrown to the supporter and the supported. They were thrown with skill, and were seized by Stanley; who twisting the end of one round his left arm, continued his hold of William with the right; and thus they were both dragged to shore, alive and safe, though thoroughly exhausted.

The joy of Mr. Townsend when he saw his son safely landed on the shore may be imagined, but cannot be described: again and again he thanked and blessed the preserver of his boy; and such was the effect of his gratitude, and of the consciousness of having performed a commendable action, upon the Stranger, that he cheerfully and at once agreed to accompany the happy family to the vicarage. Here every possible precaution was adopted, to prevent either the preserver or the preserved from suffering by the adventure of the morning. Doses of mulled wine were duly administered, the wet

clothes of both were stripped off, and as the habiliments of Mr. Townsend were capable, upon a moderate calculation, of containing three persons of the calibre of Stanley, the latter was reluctantly persuaded to go to bed, till a change of dress should be sent for to his lodgings.

He had been laid down about five minutes, when Mr. Townsend was directed to his apartment by a violent ringing of the bell. On entering he found him half out of bed, and staring round the room with a glance of the most fearful anxiety. "Where is my dog?" cried he, as the Vicar entered; "Great God! where is Flora?"

Mr. Townsend again rang the bell, and on the appearance of a servant, demanded if Mr. Stanley's dog were below. When an answer was given in the negative, no persuasions of the good Vicar could prevail upon Stanley to lie still. He leaped out of bed with all the activity of rude health, and would have rushed forth with no other covering upon him than a night-shirt belonging to the Vicar, had not the messenger, who had been despatched for his change of garments, at that moment fortunately entered. In two minutes he was completely dressed, and

without waiting to speak a word, either to Mr. Townsend or his daughters, he darted from the house, and ran in the direction of the river.

He had been gone about a quarter of an hour, when Elizabeth, whose eye had followed his abrupt departure, and could not be withdrawn from the spot where he was last visible, beheld him remounting the hill, and approaching the vicarage with the step and glare of a maniac. In an instant the room-door was burst open, and he stood before them. His eyes were extended to their fullest stretch, his hair was dishevelled, his cheeks were pale as ashes, and his teeth clenched closely together, as with one foot advanced, and one hand pressed firmly against his forehead, he stood in the middle of the parlour,—the very statue of despair.

"What is the matter, Mr. Stanley?" cried the Vicar, advancing towards him. "For God's sake speak, and give your feelings tongue. What has befallen you?"

"The last punishment which God himself is able to inflict," shrieked, rather than replied, he. "My only remaining friend, the sole being upon earth which knew my unworthiness, and yet adhered to me, is no more."

"Be calm, I beseech you," rejoined the Vicar, gently taking him by the hand, and leading him towards a chair—"Be calm, and moderate your feelings. God is gracious and merciful, even in his judgments; and he will yet be merciful and gracious unto you. What friend have you thus unexpectedly lost?"

"What friend!" cried the unhappy youth, in a voice of thunder, and snatching away the hand which at first he had suffered Mr. Townsend to retain. "Did you ask me what friend? Had I any friend but one? but my dog, my Flora? O God, this is more than I can bear!"

Mr. Townsend was shocked and humbled by the violence of Stanley's manner. He conjured him not to blaspheme the name of his Maker, or abuse his kindness by thus violently mourning for the loss of a brute. "Your dog was no doubt faithful, and a source of comfort to you; but God forbid there should not be stronger ties than your affection for a dumb animal, to bind you to life."

Stanley replied not. All external objects swam before his eyes,—he staggered back in the vain attempt of reaching a chair; but before

his hand could grasp it, he fell senseless on the floor. Mr. Townsend hastened to raise him up, when a loud shriek from his eldest daughter drew his attention to Elizabeth: she too had fainted, and the good man almost wished at the instant that God would remove him at once out of a world so full of troubles.

But this was no time for giving way to feelings of despondency: he rang the bell with violence, and with the assistance of Charlotte and the servants, soon contrived to remove both invalids to bed. As to Elizabeth, she remained in her fit comparatively but a short time, and as soon as her senses returned, made all haste to dispel the fears of her relatives, and to offer her help where it might perhaps be wanted. But Stanley continued long in a state of insensibility, and when at length reason returned, he appeared so feeble and worn out, that it seemed as if the hour of his dissolution were at hand. All attempts at speech, or even motion, were abortive; and it was only by an occasional uplifting of the heavy eyelid, and the sound of his short and thick breathing, that the by-standers were assured that life was not actually extinct.

Mr. Townsend lost no time in despatching a messenger for the nearest medical practitioner; but at the period of his incumbency the knights of the lancet were much less numerous than they are at present. Very few country villages could then boast of a better surgeon than the barber; and as Mr. Townsend had no great faith in the medical skill of the personage who trimmed the beards and cropped the heads of the parishioners of Wetheral, he directed his servant to ride as fast as his horse could carry him to Carlisle. This journey was executed in a moderate space of time; and towards evening a grave-looking person, dressed in sober brown, arrived at the vicarage; bringing with him a box of salves, lancets, and potions; and exhibiting from the mouth of one of the pockets of his coat, a small yellow pipe made of ivory. The said personage was no other than the celebrated Doctor Kill-well, a gentleman long renowned in Carlisle and its vicinity, for his singular success in consigning his patients to a state of lasting repose.

Dr. Kill-well immediately proceeded to the apartment of Mr. Stanley, and having felt his pulse, looked steadily into the pupils of his

eyes, and pressed his hand upon his forehead, declared in a very solemn manner, that he apprehended the gentleman to be afflicted with water on the brain. "If you observe, sir," said he, turning to Mr. Townsend, "the pupil of the eye does not distend, and there is a coldness and fluidity in the region of the pericranium, which I hold to be indicative of very dangerous symptoms. For water, you know, is cold, and blood is warm; and therefore, when the blood which ought to circulate through the vessels of the brain becomes corrupted, and gives place to water, an unnatural chilliness is invariably the consequence. Now, in the treatment of this disorder," continued he, beating all the while with the gold head of his cane upon his left hand, "the faculty differ much among themselves. There is my friend, Dr. [redacted] of Edinburgh, a gentleman for whom I [redacted]ain the highest respect, and who, indeed, was my class-fello[redacted] college — hem — you have heard of Dr. S[redacted] sir, I presume?"

"I really have not," replied Mr. Townsend; "but I am at a loss to conceive what Dr. S[redacted] or water on the brain, has to do with this young gentleman. That he may have water in

his stomach I can very well imagine, because he this day, at the peril of his own life, saved my son from drowning; but that there is any water upon his brain appears a gratuitous assumption. What I wish you to do, however, is to administer to him a refreshing cordial, if you are able; if not, I will try whether I cannot doctor him myself."

"Able, sir! what do you mean by using the term able? Able, indeed! Why I have sent too many patients to their graves not to be able to do this gentleman's business. Able, indeed!"

"Dr. Kill-well," rejoined the Vicar, "do you intend to give this youth any reviving medicine or not? because we are now only wasting time, which in his case I take to be precious."

"And so it is, and it is precious to me also; but who can administer to a disease without first of all enquiring into its symptoms? You tell me this gentleman has water in his stomach. It is very possible that he may; but I contend that he has at the same time water in his head, which is a disease much more alarming. It is very true, that between the stomach and the head there are great sympathies and very intimate connection. It is not, therefore, by any means

impossible, that the water may have risen from his stomach to his brain; because, if the fountain be too full, it must discharge itself by some channel or another. Now, as the natural course of the stomach's stream is downwards, we will, if you please, try whether we cannot relieve the head, by making use of this instrument," pulling at the same time the forementioned pipe, &c. out of his pocket.

At this the Vicar lost all patience, and having told him his mind more freely than perhaps the common rules of good breeding might warrant, he ordered his servant to show him to the door.

Being now left entirely to his own energies, Mr. Townsend proceeded to administer to his patient such simple restoratives as common sense, and a slight knowledge of the virtues of drugs, may at all times dictate; and he had soon the satisfaction to see, that his skill had not been over-rated. Stanley quickly exhibited symptoms of recovering strength. The potions, too, which had been given, began gradually to operate as they were designed to operate; and Mr. Townsend, before he quitted the

apartment, which he did not do till a pretty late hour, had the happiness to perceive, that his patient had fallen into a sound sleep, which gave every promise of, at least temporary convalescence.

CHAP. V.

A DEATH-BED.

The sleep into which the narcotics, administered to him by the Vicar, had thrown young Stanley, was long, and apparently sound; for he awoke next morning, about ten o'clock, with senses perfectly restored, and in full command of the faculty of speech. The satisfaction of his kind host at this event was scarcely less lively than if the convalescent had been his own son; but he would by no means suffer his newly recovered power to be too suddenly exercised, though it was very evident from the patient's gestures and ejaculations, that he was anxious to exercise it, and eager to communicate something or another of consequence to his friend and attendant. His manner, on awaking from that slumber, seemed, indeed, to have undergone a complete change. His eye no longer rolled about in frenzied desperation; his bosom no longer heaved with the short quick breathings of despair. His expression of countenance was, perhaps, more sorrowful and melancholy than it had yet been; but it had lost all its

fierceness, and told most plainly, that a proud spirit was at length subdued into humility and resignation.

During the whole of that day Mr. Townsend assiduously avoided entering into conversation with his guest; but on the morrow, perceiving some symptoms of returning despair about his glances and general manner, he determined not to put off any longer a conference which he himself evidently desired; being justly fearful, lest the hour of softness might pass away, and the young man relapse into his original gloom and taciturnity. As soon, therefore, as his patient had tasted his morning meal, and had been rendered as comfortable as his situation would permit, the good Vicar repaired to his apartment, and drawing a chair close to the side of the bed, began the following conversation.

"I could perceive by your manner yesterday, Mr. Stanley, that you were desirous of communicating to me something which lay heavy on your mind. I did not then consider that you were sufficiently strong to bear the agitation likely to be produced by our conference, and I therefore avoided entering into your wishes. But to-day you are better; I am therefore not

only willing but anxious to become your confidant — from no motive of idle or impertinent curiosity, believe me, but with the real hope and desire of speaking to you words of comfort. I know very well, that when the mind is overloaded it is no easy or agreeable task to begin the labour of unburdening it; but, trust me, — trust the assertion of an old man, who has seen a good deal of life, both in joy and sorrow, — that not only are our pleasures heightened, but our miseries are diminished by communicating them to others. Speak freely then, my young friend," added he, kindly taking in his the pale thin hand which lay motionless upon the coverlid, " speak freely and openly to one who will at least not betray your secrets, even if he can suggest no remedy for your misfortunes."

Stanley was silent for several minutes, during which time a variety of expressions went and came across his interesting countenance. From these it was easy to discover the nature of the struggle which was going on within his bosom. That bosom was clearly overcharged, even to bursting: the burthen which it bore was, probably, a dreadful one; and yet it seemed less dreadful to bear it in all the weight of indivi-

dual knowledge, than to lessen the load at the expense of the humiliating conviction, that his secret had been confided to another human being besides himself. Mr. Townsend saw all this, from the various glances which darted from his now bright dark eye, and he wisely determined, rather to lead his patient by degrees to the point which he wished him to attain, than too rudely to bear upon it at once. Instead, therefore, of renewing his exhortation, he seemed to change the topic of discourse, by observing—

"Your poor dog must have been a great favourite with you. I never before saw any one so deeply affected by the loss of a dumb animal."

The Vicar had touched the only chord which at this moment, perhaps, could have awakened within the bosom of his auditor a feeling of deep sorrow, unmingled with shame.

"She was, indeed, sir," replied he, "such a favourite as I have no words to state. She was to me father, mother, wife, and sister;—every thing, in short, which could bind a man to life, or prevent his taking it away with his own desperate hand. But, strange as it may seem, I

do not now grieve that she perished. While she lived there was still something which attached me to this world; now she is gone, the last tie has snapped asunder, and nothing remains for me, but to die."

"I cannot bear to hear you talk thus," rejoined the Vicar; "you have, I trust, both friends and relations who are interested in your fate, and in whose society life may yet be a scene of happiness. And if the reverse were the case, remember, that it is as sinful in us to wish for death, as it would be to rush uncalled into the presence of our Maker."

"Sir," replied Stanley, with somewhat of his former fierceness in the tone, "I tell you that that dog was the only friend I possessed; — she has now left me, and I have nothing to do, except to follow her."

"Young man," said the Vicar, "your last expression is unworthy of a Christian, and a man of sense. Think you that there is no difference between yourself and a brute even now; and that there will not be a much greater difference hereafter?"

"Why do you ask me that question?" interrupted Stanley, wildly. "Do you suppose that

I am not as much convinced of the reality of a future state as yourself? Have I not striven, and striven with all my might, to persuade myself of the contrary? — But I could not succeed."

"Then God, of his infinite mercy, forgive you the attempt! I see that your conscience is loaded with guilt. Young man, make haste to confess and repent of your sins; for I tell you, as a minister of Christ, that whatever they may be, there is still hope of pardon for you, provided your penitence be sincere."

The Stranger paused for a few seconds, as if struggling against the suffocating feeling of despair. At length he murmured, in a tone of voice hardly articulate, "There is not a crime, of which man or devil can be guilty, that I have not committed!"

Mr. Townsend would not speak, lest his speaking might interrupt the train of thought into which the penitent was evidently falling. But the struggle in Stanley's bosom gradually ceased; his eye lost its fire, and his cheek its flush; and gently squeezing the Vicar's hand, he whispered out, "Not now, not now; I cannot bear it now." These almost inarticulate

words were followed by a falling of the eyelids, and he dropped back upon his pillow in a state between fainting and slumber.

Mr. Townsend now perceived, that to attempt to pursue the discourse any further, at that time, would not only be useless but cruel; he therefore adjusted the bedclothes round the sick man's shoulders, and having noted that his respiration was regular, and his posture easy, he gently stole out of the room, determined to renew the conversation, as soon as he should find the Stranger able, and in a fit mood to bear it.

But the period to which the Vicar looked forward did not arrive so speedily as he expected. Day after day elapsed, and the Stranger showed no symptoms of wishing the conversation to be renewed, though he eagerly embraced every opportunity which Mr. Townsend gave him, of conversing upon the merits of Christ's death, and the boundless goodness of the Creator. He likewise requested to be lifted up in his bed, and supplied with pen and ink, and many hours of each day were expended by him in writing.

He had been now ten days confined to bed,

and it was evident that his end was rapidly approaching. The physician, indeed, a very different sort of person from Dr. Kill-well, assured his host, that he could not hold it many days; when one evening he requested that Mr. Townsend would sit down by his bed-side, and the time being twilight, he particularly desired that no candles might be lighted. With both requests Mr. Townsend readily complied, and the door being shut, he seated himself by the side of his patient, in anxious expectation of what was to follow.

He had sat, perhaps five minutes, without a word being uttered on either side; when Stanley raising himself with difficulty upon his elbow, stared into the Vicar's face, and said, "You have repeatedly told me, that God is a being of infinite mercy; are there then no sins which he will not or cannot forgive?"

"I have told you before," was the reply, "and I again repeat my assertion, that whatever our past sins may have been, God will forgive us, provided we be truly penitent, for his son Christ Jesus' sake."

"Suppose then, you were called upon to

visit the death bed of—" he paused here as for breath or courage, or both, but mustering up a desperate resolution, he continued, in a hollow and sepulchral tone, "the death bed of an incestuous person, a murderer, and a parricide, —would you say to such a one that there was hope of pardon for him."

Mr. Townsend was prepared to hear some horrible confession, some tale of guilt more deep in its dye than the walks of civilised life are wont to bring before us; but for such a speech as this he was totally unprepared.—When he attempted to reply, his tongue refused its office, and clave to the roof of his mouth; his whole frame shook with agitation,—whilst the Stranger, starting up, as if a new lease of strength and health had been granted to him, grasped with a convulsive force the motionless hand of the Vicar, and shrieked forth, in a voice absolutely appalling, "Speak—my eternal destiny is in your hands!"

The words, but much more the tone in which they were uttered, recalled the Vicar to himself. He did not return the squeeze with which the sick man still held his palm; but in a slow and

solemn tone replied, "young man, there is but one sin mentioned in the Gospel, for the commission of which no hope of pardon is held out: that sin you have not named. The catalogue of guilt which you have enumerated is indeed most dreadful; but if you be the guilty person, I bid you not to despair; for God's mercies are boundless, and even to you, if you be sincerely and truly penitent, the benefits of the great sacrifice upon the cross will surely extend."

Gradually and tremblingly the young man relaxed the grasp with which he had held the Vicar's hand; his form fell slowly back upon the bed, and having murmured out, "thank you, thank you," he closed his eyes, and became insensible. Mr. Townsend felt assured that the last struggle was over. He therefore rang the bell for lights, in the full expectation of finding himself seated beside a corpse; but, before they were brought in, Stanley had recovered his recollection. In a whisper, he besought the Vicar to administer to him the sacrament, and pointed at the same time to a bundle of papers, which he informed his host contained the full particulars of his melancholy story. "These," said he, "are yours, as soon as the soul has left this

body. You will lay me in the churchyard near the western door, placing a cross at my feet, and a stone at my head; bury with me this locket," holding up a little glass case filled with dark hair; "and let the only inscription upon the head-stone be, 'The Stranger's Grave.'"

Mr. Townsend readily consented to comply with all these requests. The sacrament was administered to the dying man, in presence of the whole family, and he received it, if not without emotion, at least without any seeming dread or horror.

He lingered for two days after these transactions had taken place, during which time he continued perfectly sensible, though unable to speak. To Mr. Townsend's conversation and prayers he listened with evident satisfaction to the last moment, and a little before midnight on the twelfth of January he gave up the ghost. The wishes which he had expressed relative to his funeral and monument were carefully attended to; the locket of hair was not removed from about his neck; a grave was dug for him near the western door of the church; a cross of stone was erected at his feet, and a plain marble slab at his head, bearing upon it no more than

this simple inscription, "The Stranger's Grave." Of these latter nothing now remains to meet the eye of the curious traveller. Time has swept them both into oblivion; — but what earthly thing is there which time will not sooner or later overwhelm in the same dark flood!

CHAP. VI.

OUR TALE.

BEING aware, from experience, that a narrative written in the first person is, to the generality of readers, less pleasing than one which proceeds in the third, I shall take the liberty of throwing Mr. Stanley's story into language of my own; though perfectly conscious that in so acting I run the risk of doing injustice to the delineation of passions and feelings with which no human being, except the original writer himself, could possibly be acquainted. For this failure, however, I must crave my reader's pardon; and I shall be the more confident of at least deserving it, if he will have the goodness to set his own imagination to work, wherever he may find that mine has not properly completed its task.

Edward Stanley was the only son of a dignified clergyman, whose principal living and chief residence lay in one of the southern counties of England. His mother, who in her youth was

a celebrated beauty and reigning toast, had been twice married. By her first husband she had one daughter, and by Dr. Stanley a daughter and a son. Between the ages of her eldest and her youngest child, there was a difference of nearly twenty years, consequently little Edward knew nothing of his half-sister except by report; for before he had attained his third year she had married a Scottish gentleman of the name of Gordon, and removed with him into the country of his fathers. The family in Preston rectory, therefore, consisted of Dr. and Mrs. Stanley, and their two children, Margaret and Edward, of whom Margaret was the elder by a year and a half.

Little Edward was a boy of sprightly habits, but extremely delicate constitution. He was accordingly the idol of his parents, who almost neglected their more robust and less clever daughter, by devoting nearly the whole of their care and attention to their son. The child never formed a wish which was not instantly gratified, or if it was opposed for a while, a little crying or pettishness on his part was sure to bring them round to his opinion; the consequence was exactly such as might be expected; he grew up to

be, what most sickly children are, a perverse, self-willed, petulant boy.

In his natural disposition, however, there was much capability of good. He was kind-hearted and affectionate to as great a degree as the mistaken method adopted in his education would permit. His parts were of no ordinary description; and of his father, who was the sole instructor of his childhood, he was really and passionately fond. For his mother and sister likewise, he entertained a much warmer regard than perhaps the generality of children, when very young, feel for any being besides themselves. In short, the family was for many years united and happy, as the good qualities of its heads justly merited that it should be.

It is by no means impossible that Edward Stanley might have overcome the bad effects of his early education, and grown up to be a good and respectable man, but for a dangerous illness with which he was unfortunately attacked, soon after he had completed his fourteenth year. His complaint, which was pulmonary, wore at first an aspect so unfavourable, that for several months his life was despaired of; and his anxious and sorrowing parents determined that the few days which yet remained to him should not be

marked by more unhappiness than could not possibly be avoided. They therefore sedulously prevented all his desires, and indulged every caprice or whim which rose, from time to time, in his capricious bosom. His studies were wholly laid aside, as being at once useless to a dying lad, and too fatiguing for a sickly mind. Change of air and scene was recommended as of probable utility towards his recovery, and the father and mother, leaving Margaret at a boarding school, wandered with young Edward from place to place, till they had gone the tour of nearly the whole island of Great Britain. But their care and anxiety were amply repaid by the convalescence of their darling. Under the influence of the mild climate of Clifton, young Edward gradually recovered, and returned home to Preston in three months completely recruited in body, and ruined in mind.

His health being now pretty well established, Dr. Stanley conceived, that no time ought to be lost in resuming the studies which his illness had interrupted. But to a renewal of study the young convalescent was wholly disinclined. Hitherto his education had been directed with a view to his entering the university, and following

the profession of his father; but to the church he soon contracted an insuperable aversion. In the course of their travels, the Stanleys had frequently passed some weeks at a time in different garrison towns. During these sojourns their son had formed an acquaintance with the officers of the corps which were quartered there; and being captivated with their smart clothes and dashing appearance, his entire soul became forthwith bent on the noble profession of arms.

I have already stated that in spite of many faults, Edward Stanley was a boy of very affectionate disposition. Though at first, therefore, he resolutely stood out against the entreaties of his parents, refusing ever again to open Sophocles, or waste one thought upon university honours, nevertheless when he saw that his refusal inflicted positive pain upon his father, he so far overcame his reluctance to study, as to sit down for the space of time formerly devoted to it in each day, with the book lying open before him. But for reading of a proper description he had lost all taste. His delight was in tales of battles, poems, and love-songs; and thus, at the unripe age of sixteen, the boy's head was absolutely full of all the fancies and follies of romance.

Instigated by the same feeling which prompted him to go on with his Greek, Edward reluctantly agreed to be entered at one of the colleges in Oxford, and he even returned thither at the expiration of the long vacation, fully resolved to reside his four terms, and give a college life a fair chance of being relished. But it would have been well both for him and his father, that the residence had not been kept. Being an high-spirited youth, and a youth of ready wit, his society was much courted by the gay and dashing blades of his college; so that at the close of the period which had been allotted as his probation, he felt himself compelled to quit college, on account of the large amount of his debts, and the excessive reputation for wildness which he had somehow contrived to secure.

Bitter, bitter was the disappointment which the announcement of this determination occasioned to the Doctor. Aware of his son's naturally good talénts, and perhaps rating them a few degrees higher than they deserved, Dr. Stanley felt as if all the hopes nourished through the entire of his life were blasted; for there was no honour within the gift of the church of which he had not persuaded himself that his son would

prove worthy, and to which, as a matter of course, he did not calculate upon his attaining. But all these bright day-dreams were now melted into thin air. The reasons assigned by Edward for refusing to return to college were such as could not be gainsayed, and as the young man assured him that he never could, or would do well, excepting as a soldier, the unhappy father was finally prevailed upon to purchase for him a pair of colours in a marching regiment.

The delight of Edward Stanley, when first he read his own name in the Gazette, no combination of words is adequate to describe. He laughed, he whistled, he sang, he danced, — he was all bustle and business, fitting himself with appointments, and trying on accoutrements, — in a word, the boy gave such evident signs of perfect happiness, that the feeling was in some measure communicated to the rest of the family; who forgot his disobedience and misconduct, in contemplating the felicity of their darling. But widely different was the feeling on all sides, when the day drew near on which he must set out to join. His regiment had already received orders to proceed upon foreign service, conse-

quently leave of absence could neither be asked nor obtained; and his parents and sister counted every hour as it passed away, fully convinced in their own minds, that their beloved boy was destined shortly to leave his bones in the unwholesome deserts of the West Indies, or on the bloody plains of Flanders.

As to Edward, his sensations were of a very mixed description. He was a lad of too much spirit not to look forward with satisfaction to the prospect of being speedily made acquainted with the duties of his profession in the field; but he loved his parents and his sister, he loved his aged nurse, — the very rectory-house, the church, and the old yew trees in the churchyard were all dear to him, and these must be abandoned. I will not say that he ever for a moment dreamt of resigning the commission which he held; but when on the morning of that day in which he was to set out for Portsmouth, his mother and sister shed torrents of tears upon his neck; — much more, when his beloved father led him into the study, and causing him to kneel down, solemnly pronounced a parent's parting benediction over him; he certainly did wish that he had never gained his end,

but that he had continued at the university, to be a stay and comfort in their declining years, to those who thus wasted so much affection upon him. For let it not be supposed that Edward was radically bad. His natural disposition was the reverse of selfish, — it had been perverted indeed by bad management, — but he had now attained that age when the spoiling of the child begins to lose its influence over the man's feelings, and Nature, be she what she may, again asserts her authority. — His grief at parting was therefore as sincere as it was profound, nor did he thoroughly shake it off till some little time after he found himself a member of the mess.

Here every thing was new and delightful to him. The martial music, the pomp and circumstance of parades, the hurry of drill, all charmed him by their novelty; nor was he in any respect displeased with the degree of deference which was paid to him by his brother officers, in virtue of his college education. At courts martial he was invariably the scribe, in drilling and exercising the men he soon began to make a conspicuous figure, in all manly and healthy games he was constantly the foremost, and over the bottle he was the soul of every

jovial party. Fortunately for him, the order of preparation which had been issued previous to his setting out for head-quarters, was followed, soon after his arrival, by one for immediate embarkation, otherwise the probability is, that in spite of a very handsome allowance from his father, and a good round sum thrust into his purse at parting, the cantonments of Portsmouth would have been as fatal to his credit, as the college and the taverns had been at Oxford.

Edward had good sense enough to be aware of this, and he rejoiced most cordially when the order arrived. — His baggage was speedily packed, his canteens fitted up, his letters of farewell written, and nothing now remained to be done, except to snatch a few hours sleep previous to the march. But his slumbers were feverish with anxiety, and the bugle roused him from his bed, almost as soon as his senses had begun to steep themselves in forgetfulness.

Edward sprang from his couch at the first blast, and hurried to the parade ground. It was a beautiful morning in May; the sun had not yet risen, but the streaks of dawn were gradually assuming a deeper and a deeper hue. The troops were mustering according to their

companies; the officers were loitering about in little groups; rude jokes, mingled with the cry of children and weeping of wives; and the laugh and the wail entered his ear together. By and by the lengthened roll of the drum called every man to his post. The word was given to march, the band struck up a merry tune, and in little more than two hours Edward Stanley was lodged on board of a transport, and hurried under the influence of a favourable breeze to the seat of war.

CHAP. VII.

A HEROINE.

It has been observed that Mrs. Stanley's daughter by her first husband, married, while Edward was yet a very little boy, a Scottish gentleman of the name of Gordon. When the marriage took place, the match, as far as worldly matters went, was regarded by the bride's connections as highly advantageous. Mr. Gordon was a man of good family; he was a merchant of great reputed wealth and extensive credit; in short, no offer could have been made of a settlement for her fatherless child which would have given greater satisfaction, in almost every respect, to a tender and affectionate mother. But the wealth of merchants is at best insecure; and this Mr. Gordon soon found to his cost. Ships freighted with rich cargoes were lost at sea, or captured by the enemy; speculations which promised the most successful results, proved unfortunate; friends for whom he had become security, forfeited their engagements,

and left him to fulfil them; till, finally, he saw the profits of many years' labour melt away like snow beneath the sunshine, and himself obliged to resign his all into the hands of importunate creditors. From the wreck of his fortune he preserved only enough to stock a little sheep farm, which, by right of inheritance, he possessed in the county of Inverness, and thither he retired with a wife and six children, determined never again to renew his intercourse with the busy world, which had so cruelly abused his easy temper.

The misfortunes of his wife's son-in-law were a source of much grief and anxiety to Dr. Stanley. Without the smallest hesitation or reluctance he stepped forward at once to assist, as far as his circumstances would permit, in educating and providing for the children; and he offered not the slightest objection to the many valuable presents which were from time to time sent off by his kind-hearted wife, in a smack or trading vessel bound for the highland capital. Of the sons, two were sent to school at his expence, and one provided with a situation in a counting-house at Leith, whilst the eldest daughter was, at the earnest request of Margaret, transplanted

from her mountain home to the more fertile, but less romantic, region of Preston. In plain language, Emily Gordon was taken into the family of Dr. Stanley as an inmate, a kindness which she soon repaid by the addition which she made to the domestic enjoyments of its members.

When she arrived at Preston, Emily Gordon had just completed her fifteenth year. She was a girl of the most striking appearance, and of the most captivating manner. Her fine hazel eye could speak the language both of tenderness and fire, her complexion was the clearest order of brunette, her teeth were white and regular, and her little well-formed mouth was the index of many passions, all of them violent and resistless. In all her thoughts and feelings she was the very child of nature. Artless to an extent hardly ever seen in a young woman of these years, she was never conscious of an emotion to which she did not give utterance. She was playful, high-spirited, and full of wit and humour; but she was at the same time tender-hearted and affectionate in no ordinary degree. To the inmates of a quiet English rectory such a girl as this could not fail to render herself a

desirable acquisition, and they consequently became before long as much attached to her as if she had really been one of themselves.

As the education of this Scottish maiden had been in some degree neglected, it was at first proposed, either that she should be sent to school, or that masters should be engaged for her instruction; but the young lady herself preferred submitting to the tuition of her aunt; and she had so thoroughly ingratiated herself into the good graces of Margaret, that the latter readily undertook the superintendence of her studies. To these it must be confessed that she zealously applied herself. In music and drawing she possessed a good natural taste, and being well instructed by her aunt, who was really an accomplished young woman, she soon became a tolerable mistress of the polite branches of female education. But there was a sad deficiency in the foundation on which these lighter ornaments ought to have been built. She had learnt, indeed, her church catechism, and was not wholly unacquainted with the history of her Bible, but of the principles of Christianity she was wofully ignorant; acting always from the bent of natural feeling, even where she acted

right, rather than from a conviction that it was her duty so to act. Fortunately for her, her heart was good, and her mind honourable; but had the contrary been the case, there was no barrier to oppose their influence, or stand up against their suggestions.

For this deficiency, however, it must not be supposed that her new governess was in any respect answerable. The period of life at which the seeds of religious knowledge ought to be sown, has certainly come and gone before a young woman attains her fifteenth year, especially if she be, as was the case with Emily Gordon, more than ordinarily womanly, both in form and notions. But Emily's father was an infidel. To him all the sacred truths of the book of life were vain fables and idle dreams; nor did he neglect any opportunity of instilling into the minds of his children the same baneful principles which actuated his own. From such a father as this how was it to be expected that any germs of sound morality could be acquired; for where there is no religion in the heart, either of man or woman, the basis of moral conduct is, to say the least of it, unstable. Mr. Gordon was, it is true, constitutionally a man of honour;

that is to say, he never wilfully broke his word, or departed from an engagement; — he would not over-reach his neighbour in a bargain;— and to all the decencies of life, he was accustomed to pay every respect: but the clergy and their doctrines were the constant subjects of his ridicule, and the most mysterious truths of religion were the best subjects for the exercise of a wretched wit. He never openly endeavoured to persuade his children that religion was a lie;— nay, he even declared that he thought it very proper for all persons, especially women, to conform to the superstition of the country, whatever it might be, in which they chanced to be born. But to spend an hour in teaching them their duty towards God and man would have been, according to his notions, an absolute waste of time; whilst every serious remark uttered by his wife, every endeavour to lift the minds of her children towards a better world, was uniformly treated with contempt, and not unfrequently interrupted with authority.

When Emily Gordon came to the rectory of Preston, though it could hardly be said that she was a professed infidel, with as little truth could it be asserted that she was a Christian more than

in name. To her the present day was every thing; — of the future she thought not, except as far as it promised some transitory enjoyment; nor did she always abstain from so far following the example held out by her father, as to turn into ridicule, not only the admonitions of her aunt, but the graver advices of the Doctor himself. And yet there was about her so much natural affection; a manner so pleasing, and an air so cheerful and enlivening, that no one could be angry with her unseasonable jests, nor even suffer much grief at their recurrence, — at least, as long as she continued in his company. But when her sweet countenance and lively form were no longer before them, both the Doctor and Mrs. Stanley could not help trembling for her future fate; nor did they neglect any means which good sense and assiduous application could suggest, of instilling into her mind more serious ideas on the most important of all subjects.

Edward Stanley had been gone some weeks when his interesting relative reached the rectory. The young people, consequently, had not yet met. But of Edward, Emily had heard much, even before she came to England: and she soon

heard a great deal more after her arrival. Edward was the idol of his whole family. His very faults were, therefore, either softened away, or put down to the score of high spirit and youthful imprudence; and in the eyes of Emily these faults were virtues. A young man, she conceived, could not be worth esteeming, whose courage was not high, his temper somewhat irascible, his passions violent, and his prudence small. Now, for all these accomplishments Edward was particularly distinguished, and he was, consequently, in her eyes, the very model of perfection. By a painting of him, likewise, which hung in the dining-room, arrayed in full regimentals, she immediately discovered that he *was remarkably handsome*; and great personal beauty being added to all his other noble qualities, decided her in the opinion, that he was the most perfect human being upon the face of the earth. She was, therefore, full of anxiety to become acquainted with her uncle. She requested and obtained permission to commence with him an epistolary correspondence, and in her letters she did not hesitate to tell, in plain language, the whole of what she thought about him. Her eyes, too, were never weary of scanning his like-

ness; in short, it was a standing joke in the family, — a joke with which she never professed herself displeased, — that Emily was over head and ears in love with her uncle, and that a dispensation ought to be applied for to the pope, in order to enable them to marry.

CHAP. VIII.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

We left our hero on board of ship, and proceeding, with the rest of his companions, to prove their gallantry before the enemy. In the course of the campaigns which followed, he gave every proof of daring courage and cool intrepidity, but he quickly discovered that the notions which he had formed to himself of carving his way, by the sword, to the command of armies, were as unsubstantial as are most other day-dreams of our youth. Where all are equally brave, it requires the occurrence of some chance, more fortunate than prudence or probability will suffer him to calculate upon, to bring a young soldier out of the obscurity in which his attachment to a particular regiment and company necessarily envelops him; and as no such chance came in the way of Edward, he returned to England, with the remains of his corps, after an active service of two years, having very lately attained to the *high* rank of a lieutenant.

As soon as the troops were landed, and lodged in the quarters assigned to them, Edward applied for leave of absence, and obtained it. With a heart swelling with those emotions which can be understood only by one who has been, for a similar space of time, absent from a home inexpressibly dear to him, Edward sprang upon the stage coach which was to convey him to Preston. As he approached the scene of his childish enjoyments, every well-known tree, or bush, or cottage, spoke a language to his bosom for which words have no power of expression. The turnpike was now passed; the old church tower now rose proudly before him, encircled, as it was wont to be, with a few aged firs and yews; the vehicle now rattled over the paved street of the town, and finally, the white walls of the rectory, overhung with grapes, in full bearing, presented themselves to his view. At the end of the lane which leads towards it, he beheld his father's old servant and two young ladies. One of these he could not mistake,—it was Margaret, his beloved sister, the playmate and companion of his youth; —but who was the other? Could this be Emily, of whom he had heard so much?—of her he had been accustomed to

think as of a romping lively child; but he beheld before him a lovely girl of seventeen; tall, graceful, and even commanding in her deportment, with an eye of fire, and a cheek flushed with anxious curiosity.—Yet, who else could it be? The problem was soon solved. Long before the coachman had time to pull up his horses, Edward had vaulted from the box and was encircled by the arms of his sister! whilst Emily,—for the stranger was no other than she. —was shedding tears beside them in very joy at beholding the being, who for so long a time had been the subject of her thoughts by day, and of her dreams by night.

I abstain from all attempts to describe the meeting which took place between Edward and his parents. The task is one which I confess far exceeds the stretch of my poor abilities, and were the contrary the case, my delineation could be fully understood only by parents and children, who, I trust, do not stand in need of it. It is sufficient to observe, that for that and the two following days, their beloved boy was hardly an instant absent from their sight or their arms, and that the joy which pervaded the parlour, made its way in full force to the kitchen. A

double allowance of ale was granted to the domestics to drink the young soldier's health; all the routine of congratulatory visits from neighbours was gone through; nay, the stream of rejoicing was so boisterous and unruly, that it was no small relief to the parties most intimately concerned, when its violence had in some degree spent itself. I must not, however, forget to mention, that in the caresses bestowed upon Edward, his faithful Flora was not neglected. She had accompanied him in all his campaigns, she had been present with him in all his battles, she had shared his rations and his cloak, and it was therefore only seemly and fitting, that she should be made heartily welcome to the good cheer of the rectory.

But among all who rejoiced in the return of Edward to the home of his father, there was none on whom that event produced a more striking effect than upon Emily. She did not obtrude herself impertinently upon his notice, she did not vie with his sister in the kisses and embraces which she bestowed; it seemed, in fact, as if the sight of him had entirely changed her disposition,—for instead of being the life of the party as she was wont to be, she became all at

once the gravest and most moody inmate of the rectory. But her dark expressive eye spoke volumes. Unconsciously, as it would appear, it wandered towards the chair on which Edward sat, or the spot where he stood; it bore not the meeting of his more free and cheerful glance, but it stole over his figure, it rested upon the lower features of his face, and when by chance it caught a beam from his sparkling eye, it instantly fell to the ground, and her cheek became crimsoned with blushes. "You are greatly changed, Emily," Margaret would occasionally observe. "What can have befallen you? I really fear that our joke will prove too true, and that we shall be obliged to apply for the dispensation in sober earnest." This joke, which was wont to produce only a laugh, or a ready assent from its object, was now received with embarrassment, and even reproved as unbecoming, or chided as ridiculous and stale.

Time passed, and the restraint which the first arrival of Edward had thrown over the manner of his niece, gradually wore away. Once more she was all life, and all animation; but she was never so lively or so animated, as when he was in her company. And Edward soon began to

show a strong partiality for the society of Emily. There were only three years between their ages, consequently they treated each other, and they were encouraged to treat each other, as cousins; or rather, I ought to have said, as brother and sister, for he made no distinction in his manner towards Margaret and her. In every sweet walk or ride, the three were constantly to be found together, till a report was spread through the parish, that Mr. Stanley and Miss Gordon would surely make a match of it.

In the preceding pages I have endeavoured, though I know not with what success, to give my reader a correct notion of the characters of these two young persons. They were both of them, be it observed, spoilt children. They were, in the strictest sense of the term, children of nature, unaccustomed to question the impulses which rose within their bosoms, and absolutely ignorant that they ought ever to be restrained. In matters of religion Edward was indeed perfectly sound. His father had taken care to impress upon his mind, from his earliest youth, a well-grounded conviction of the truths of Revelation; nor could any man be more fully persuaded than himself, that there is a state of

retribution beyond the grave, for which this world is no more than a school of probation. But alas! his religion was rather theoretical than practical. His belief was just, and reasonable, and firm; but it had little or no effect upon his conduct, which sprang, like that of Emily, rather from momentary impulse than from rational deliberation. For this the defects in his early education were no doubt greatly to be blamed; but there was likewise about Edward a natural volatility of temper, which frequently led him to perpetrate, with his eyes open, deeds for which he was all the while aware that his better reason would afterwards reproach him; and a spirit of—I know not what to call it, whether perverseness or idle romance, which led him to derive an extraordinary satisfaction in the knowledge that he was surrounded by difficulties. His natural talents were, as has been before stated, good, that is to say, he possessed a tolerable share of wit, and an imagination by no means wanting in fertility; but his whole mind was deficient in a guide, he had little or no judgment to direct him, and was absolutely devoid of prudence and foresight.

Emily, on the other hand, was almost the same creature which she had been two years ago.

Her knowledge of books, and music, and paintings, was indeed increased,—she had likewise laid aside, in a great measure, her habit of laughing at what she termed methodism and prosing; but there was still a total blank of all seriousness about her; nor could it with truth be asserted that she was one whit more religious than when first she came to Preston. And she, too, like Edward, possessed a mind full of romance, and empty of judgment. In her eyes, prudence and foresight were the qualities of mere old frumps; who had no soul for the enjoyments of refined feeling, and no nerves for the pleasures of real life. She loved her uncle because he was lively, gallant, open, generous, and rash; she admired him because he was handsome; but she doated upon him because he was romantic. Of all the poetry she ever read, his was the most exquisite, because it breathed the very spirit of love and valour, and was not a little tinctured with melancholy; for strange as it may sound, it is nevertheless true, that your dilettanti malagrugous ballad-writers are generally the merriest men, and the most alive to the gaieties of the world.

Between two young persons of a turn of mind so congenial, who can wonder than an extraor-

dinary predilection was formed. They met in the mornings with an eagerness of delight, such as they experiènced at meeting no one besides. The salutations which they freely gave to each other were longer and more sweet than those offered by any other member of the family; their converse was more lively, sometimes bordering upon the tender; when the one was absent from the other, there was nothing near capable of filling up the blank. Even his father ceased to be, with Edward, the chief image in his mental pictures; which were now almost entirely engrossed by his dear Emily. Alas, poor youth! he knew not the store of misery which he was laying up for himself and for all who were connected with him; nor did she think of any thing beyond the deep gratification derived from his society. They trusted that the tie of relationship which subsisted between them was sufficient of itself to warrant all this, and a great deal more. They forgot, or rather they knew not, that the ties of blood are in reality no better than ideal bonds; and that when two young persons, related as they were, meet for the first time, at that dangerous season when passion has attained its full growth and reason is

yet in its infancy, the obstacles which these present, are totally insufficient to restrain the advances of a feeling, which is generally powerful in exact proportion to the difficulty, or supposed difficulty of its indulgence.

CHAP. IX.

A MORNING CALL.

Dr. Stanley's circle of acquaintance, though not extensive, was in the highest degree respectable and delightful. It consisted chiefly of the families of the neighbouring incumbents, with those of one or two gentlemen of moderate fortune, whose minds were too highly cultivated, and their revenues too slender to permit their taking any pleasure in the boisterous society of the fox-hunting squires, with whom, at that period, our native country was infested. But what gave to it a superiority over the society of most country places was, that the few families which visited on terms of intimate familiarity lived so near one another, that their calls could be made, and even dinner-parties joined, at least in summer, without the necessity of keeping a carriage. Of course the arrival of Edward at the rectory gave a fresh impetus to the spirit of hospitality. Parties of his old friends were invited to meet him at all the houses where he was wont to visit, and he

had the happiness to find, that amongst them all the only alterations which time had produced, were to be found in their faces or figures, not in their hearts or affections.

One of Dr. Stanley's oldest and most steady friends in the neighbourhood, was a Colonel Franklin, whose house lay at the distance of only two fields from the rectory. Colonel Franklin, when a young man, had served with distinction in the colonies; but he had for a long time back quitted the army, and having taken a fancy to Spring Grove, near Preston, he purchased the villa, and with the last remaining branch of a large family, one only daughter, pitched his tent there, as he expressed it, for life. Sarah Franklin was just half a year younger than Edward Stanley; she was a sweet, bashful, modest, retiring girl; and previous to his joining his regiment, had been the subject of many an amatory sonnet, to the young bard. It was alleged, too, that to her young swain's attentions she was by no means averse, and the old Colonel had been heard to say, that there was no man to whose son he would sooner intrust his jewel, than his old and respected friend, Stanley.

Edward had now been several days at home,

and during the whole of that period he never once mentioned Sarah's name. This was regarded by his sister as a great proof of the changeableness of young men's fancies; and she could not help at last reproaching him with his inconstancy.

"Before you arrived," said she, "Sarah and I had planned I know not how many nice excursions and parties, and I assure you that I myself could not talk in terms of greater delight of your return than did Sarah. But I see how it is; some foreign beauty has driven poor Sarah from your mind and your heart, and she must take to weaving willow garlands, and array herself in green."

Edward laughed at his sister's idea, and confessed, what he really felt, his great shame in appearing thus to neglect an old friend. "Well then," continued he, "suppose we set out immediately, and arrange with my old flame some of these said excursions, — their times and places of execution."

Away tripped Margaret for her bonnet and parasol, with a step as light as her heart was merry; but not so Emily. She had heard of the flirtation which used to be carried on between

Sarah and Edward; but though she was on terms of the most intimate familiarity with the former, she had hardly ever joked her with it. It appeared, indeed, that the idea of Edward's marrying Miss Franklin had always given her pain; and now that the acquaintance was about to be renewed, she could not conceal from herself that it might be renewed to her sorrow. Edward perceived the alteration in her expression, but could not account for it. "Are you ill, Emily?" said he; "you look very sad and strange all at once."

"Oh no, not ill at all," replied she, endeavouring to force a smile; "but I was thinking that it looked like rain, and that we had better wait till the shower is over. And now I think of it, we need not go to day, for the Franklins are gone out in the carriage, and probably will not return till evening."

"Then you had better tell Margaret so, and we will walk somewhere else."

With a countenance once more restored to its usual animation, Emily flew up stairs and communicated to Margaret the result of this conference; but Margaret was determined, at least, to leave her brother's card at the house.

"It would look positively ill, if he were to be longer at home without enquiring after the Colonel and his daughter." Against this reasoning no reply could be offered, so Emily robed herself likewise, and they set off through the fields towards Spring Grove.

Just as they came in sight of the house, the Colonel's carriage made its appearance, coming round from the stables. "Why, how could you say they had gone out in the carriage, Emily?" observed Edward, "is not that the Franklin livery?"

"I only meant," stammered out Emily, "that they were going out; and if you had not been in such a hurry they might have been gone, and thus the bore of the visit would have been avoided by leaving a card. But I suppose you want to renew your flirtations with Sally. — Oh, you need not blush, for I know all about it."

This last observation was made in that half-laughing, half-pettish tone of voice, which could not fail of exciting the risibility of him to whom it was addressed, and he replied with rather a provoking grin. "What! are you jealous, my fair Emily? — But never mind, she is no doubt

a very pretty girl, but not quite so pretty as you."

There was no time for farther reply, for the group had been noticed from the windows, and the Colonel and Sarah were advancing on the lawn to meet them. "Welcome home, my brave boy," cried the Colonel, squeezing the hand of Edward, and patting him on the back at the same time. "You are most heartily welcome home, with all your honours budding fresh about you. Sarah, Sarah, why do you not run and kiss your old sweetheart?"

Sarah shrunk back, rather than advanced, as the Colonel uttered these words, and a deep blush overspread her whole face and bosom; but Edward was perfectly collected, he saw in her no longer the object of a boyish attachment, but a very pretty creature, with whom he could be as intimate, and as innocently so, as with a sister. He therefore took her in his arms, and imprinting a kiss upon her cheek, said, "Ah, Sarah, is it thus we meet after so long a separation!"

While this was going on, Margaret and Emily stood by as spectators; but they stood with feelings evidently very different. Mar-

garet was all cheerfulness and satisfaction, she shook hands with the Colonel, and kissed and embraced his daughter; whilst Emily, keeping her eyes rooted on the ground, was awkwardly twirling her parasol, to the imminent danger of both silk and stick.

"Why, Emily, my bonny Scotch lassie, what is the matter with you to-day?" asked the Colonel; "you look as glumpy and dull as if the clan of the Camerons, or some other horde, had herried the braw tower of Glenfiddy, and carried off the plenishing from both byre and hall."

"I don't know," replied Emily, hardly daring to look up, "but I think we are all much in the way here; these two gentlefolks would, I am sure, be much better pleased to be left alone together, for we cannot fail to be a restraint upon them."

"By my faith, girl, and I think you are in the right on't," replied the Colonel, as a smile of satisfaction crossed his rugged features. "I think the best thing we can do, will be for you and I to go and flirt together in that grove, yonder; and as for Meg, why we will send her home again, to keep the old folks in good humour."

Emily laughed at this sally, and gradually recovering herself, the whole party walked into the house. Here proper dispositions were made, and a time fixed, for a delightful pic-nic along the river's side; the party of which it was to be composed was distinctly named, each family had its share of provisions allotted to it, and the friends parted in the full anticipation of a happy day, very early in the ensuing week.

CHAP. X.

A PARTY OF PLEASURE.

It was quite impossible that the strangeness of Emily's behaviour during the morning's call should not make a deep impression both upon Edward and Margaret; the former indeed looked back to it with a degree of painful satisfaction, for which he felt totally at a loss how to account. "Were she not my niece," said he to himself, as he paced his room backwards and forwards, instead of dressing, as he ought to have done, for dinner; "Were she not my niece, I could understand why her pettishness this morning might give me pleasure, — I should in that case fancy, — what? —" and he stopped short, both in his train of thoughts and in his walk; he looked from the window, he poured water into the basin, he sat down upon a chair, and opened a book, — he shut it again, — he threw it aside, and took once more to promenading the chamber. "This is all folly, downright absolute folly," at length he exclaimed, shaking his head

violently, as if by the motion he could free it from some obtrusive idea. "What have I to do with such dreams? The thing is impossible, utterly, totally impossible."

So saying, he hastily completed his toilet, and repaired to the drawing-room.

With respect to Margaret again, her thoughts, though very different in kind from those of her brother, were not upon the whole much more tranquil. She would not suffer herself to imagine, even for an instant, that any feeling existed in the bosom of Emily towards Edward which ought not to exist: that was a matter not so much as to be embodied in a thought. But Emily's manner was certainly most singular; she must have appeared in a very strange light, both to the Colonel and Sarah: and not only so, but she must have placed both Edward and herself, in a light not less extraordinary. Such freaks must not again be suffered to exhibit themselves; she would speak to her niece about it, and caution her with respect to her future deportment.

When she came down to the drawing-room, she found in it only Edward and Emily. They were standing with their backs leaning against

the ledge of an open window; his arm was round her waist, and her elbow rested upon his shoulder. They were not speaking, but there was an unusual degree of languor in their eyes, and their silence was extremely eloquent. At the noise of the opening door they started from their attitude, as if they had been surprised in the commission of some criminal action, and the blood mounted to the cheeks of both of them, when they noted that their posture had been matter of scrutiny to Margaret.

"I am glad I have found you, Emily," said Margaret, in a tone of some asperity; "I wanted to tell you, and I have no objection to Edward's hearing it, that your behaviour this morning was very silly and very unbecoming. You looked and spoke for all the world as if Edward had been your affianced bridegroom, and Sarah Franklin some flirting interloper, who was desirous of jilting you out of your sweetheart."

Emily's face again coloured, but it was with the flush of indignation. "Margaret," said she, "if you mean that speech as a joke, it is a joke which I do not relish; if as a serious reproof, I do not deserve it, neither will I take it."

Margaret was about to reply in a still more

angry tone than she had assumed before, when Edward interrupted her, by exclaiming —

"Bless my soul, girls, one would think you were both affianced brides, and both affianced to me. I beg of you not to quarrel on my account, for, as I cannot marry either my sister or my niece, so neither will I marry that pretty inanimate thing Sarah Franklin."

"You might go farther, and fare worse," cried Margaret, tartly; "but as for Miss Emily, there, she need not, considering all things, hold her head quite so high towards me."

"Margaret," cried Edward, "your allusion is an ungenerous one, such as I never expected would have been made by you. Emily, forgive her. Nay, do not cry," (for Emily had burst into tears,) "there is no need for weeping; it was hastily said, and is, I am sure, as hastily repented of."

Edward had certainly taken up his sister's expression in a sense which it was not intended to bear; for she was much too noble-minded to reproach her niece, even in thought, with the misfortunes of her family, or her own state of dependence. Her sole allusion was to the relation in which Emily and herself stood, as aunt

and niece, and as governess and pupil. But the idea which Edward rashly suggested adhered to the mind of Emily, and caused her to shed those tears, which sprang rather from wounded pride than from a consciousness of having merited reproof by the folly of her conduct. Edward was, however, a mediator, possessing great influence over the contending parties, and he exercised that influence so successfully, that before the dinner-bell had rung, or the old people joined them, the most perfect peace and good humour were restored.

It were unnecessary to detail at length the transactions of the four days which intervened between the occurrence of the above-mentioned family disputes and the happy morning fixed upon for the delightful pic-nic. All things within the rectory went on much as they were wont to do since Edward's return. He and Emily were hardly ever apart. If one left the room, the other was sure to find a pretence for soon following; and then by some chance or another they always contrived to meet in the passage, or upon the stairs, and to exchange a pressure of the hand, or an innocent kiss, before they parted. The hours of light, too, flew past

so rapidly, that the evening uniformly closed in before half the day appeared to have passed by; and then the hours of darkness were so tedious in their progress, that both Edward and Emily believed every night that the sun would never rise again.

At length he arose in cloudless serenity upon the morning of that day which was destined to witness so much mirth and glee beside the majestic waters of the Thames. Punctually at ten o'clock the sons and daughters of four clergymen, two 'squires, with Sarah Franklin, Margaret, Edward, and Emily Gordon, mustered on the lawn before the rectory house at Preston; whilst a little way off stood two donkeys, loaded with panniers of cold provisions, wine, cyder, and other luxuries, together with three men-servants, who were allotted to wait upon the party. Two boats, a four-oared barge, and a little skiff, were moored beside the weir close by; but as exercise as well as pleasure was the order of the day, the party determined to walk to the dining-place, and to return home in the evening by water.

"Come, Emily," said Edward, as they prepared to start, "you shall have one arm, and who will take the other?"

"Sarah shall take it," cried Margaret. "Go, Sarah, see, my brother offers you his arm."

Sarah, with a blush and a smile, conspicuously indicative of pleasure, immediately put her arm within Edward's. But she scarcely ventured to touch it with her hand, and when she did, he might have felt, had not his thoughts been otherwise employed, the thrill which ran through her whole frame. But Edward's attention was entirely engrossed by the being who leant almost her full weight upon his left arm, and who ever and anon gave to it a squeeze of affection, in return for the pressure which hers underwent against his side. Not that Edward and Emily were so much engaged by thoughts of each other as to spoil the pleasure of the rest of the party: they chatted and laughed as freely as any; when the rural meal was spread, none were more riotous or even boisterous than they; though it might be noted, that in the romping which afterwards took place, some singular fatuity always brought them together. The day, in short, passed off without any occurrence to interrupt its harmony; nay, it may even be said, an assertion which in such cases, I apprehend, can but seldom be hazarded, that there was

scarcely an individual attached to the party who did not find his or her expectations of enjoyment fully realised.

At last the lengthening shadows of the tall trees under which they now reclined, absolutely weary with laughter and merriment, gave warning that the hour for returning homeward had come. There are few events in the minor affairs of life which strike the young bosom with a more sombre and even gloomy feeling, than does the ending of a day of pleasure. We set out in the morning with spirits buoyant and light; we calculate six hours as if they were so many months; we enter so heartily into every thing which tends to keep up, or even heighten the sensation of gaiety, that what with the natural relaxation of spirits over-exerted, and the retiring of daylight together, the turning of our faces homewards is usually the signal for silence and solitary contemplation. On the present occasion this truth was fully felt, though perhaps not admitted. In silence and languor the late riotous party rose from the green turf on which for some minutes past they had been reclining, and bent their slow and unwilling steps towards the river.

In as short a time as an embarkation of eight ladies and five gentlemen could take place, the boats were filled and ready to start. But in the general arrangement of places it chanced, I know not by what accident, that Edward and Emily, accompanied by Sarah Franklin, took possession of the little skiff. Leaving the rest to make their way down the stream as quickly as the motion of a heavily laden four-oared barge would permit, Edward, seizing the sculls, shot on with his fair burthen, having Sarah behind him and Emily in front.

They had proceeded some way, when weariness, or perhaps more truly a desire to be able to chat more freely with his fair companions, induced young Stanley to lay aside his oars, and to hoist a sail. There was, it is true, some wind stirring, but it was not sufficient to cause any apprehension of danger; and even if the breeze were twice as strong as it was, the tall trees on the bank of the river would shelter them; whilst by holding the sheet in his hand, he could at once, on the occurrence of a squall, let all fly, and they must immediately right again.

Edward's reasoning was sufficient to convince

both the ladies, and his assurances stilled the fears of at least one; but the terror of Sarah was not so easily allayed, and she sat with both hands grasping Edward's arm, as if by this means she could secure herself from harm. On they went with the speed of lightning, the little boat bending over the water till her lee gunwale fairly dipped into the river; but Edward only laughed at Sarah's terror, and again repeated his assurances that all was safe. And so it might have been, had the bank of the river been covered all the way down by bushy trees. But there was a spot right a-head opposite to which no trees grew. Towards it they rushed with amazing rapidity, and before Edward had time, encumbered as he was by the hold of the terrified Sarah, to let go the sheet, or haul the boat upon the wind, the full violence of a squall took her, and in an instant she was upset.

The place where the accident occurred chanced to be one of the deepest in all that part of the Thames; and what was worse, the boat upset a good way from shore. But Edward was an excellent swimmer. He seized Sarah, who chanced to be next him, and was making with her towards land, when the sight of Emily, as

she rose above the water, recalled him to his senses, and he instantly dropped the one, that he might preserve the other. He dropped her, however, so near the boat, that by an involuntary exertion, she was enabled to grasp its half-elevated keel, whilst holding Emily by the hair, he dragged her, with the greatest difficulty, to land.

Having placed her in safety his joy was so great that he almost forgot the perilous situation of Sarah; but to a sense of this his companion speedily recalled him. Again he plunged into the water, and made towards the boat. But before he could reach it, the poor girl's strength became exhausted, and, letting go her hold, she sank to rise no more. In vain did he search for her in all directions near the spot where the accident occurred; he saw her once, and then she waved her hand to him in token of farewell; but he saw her not again. The force of the current carried her away, nor was she picked up till next morning, when she was found a lifeless corpse, at no great distance from her father's house.

CHAP. XI.

A CHILDLESS FATHER.

Edward had just ceased to make a last effort to save the drowning girl, and with difficulty had made his way back to land: he was lying in a state of utter exhaustion upon the river's brink, with Emily all wet and in an attitude of distraction hanging over him, when the four-oared barge began to make its appearance round a promontory or bow of land which had hitherto concealed it from observation. The voice of mirth and revelry still issued from that barge as it hove in sight; but all at once it ceased, and the most horrible apprehensions took possession of the minds of those who formed its crew. A long straight sweep of water lay before them, but in all its extent they could discover nothing of their partner, till suddenly one of the party who sat in the bow, exclaimed, in a voice of horror, that he perceived something like the skiff, bottom upwards, slowly floating down the tide. All eyes were instantly directed to the

spot to which he pointed; the rowers applied a double portion of strength to each stroke, and in a few seconds their fears were too dreadfully realized. Margaret saw no more. Whilst the rest, gazing wildly around, were in part relieved by observing figures on the bank, she had fallen back from her seat in a fainting fit; nor did she recover her consciousness till after the rest of the party had lifted her on shore, and were themselves made acquainted with the real extent of their misfortune. But she opened her eyes at length to a sense of comparative, nay even positive happiness, for the first object on which they rested was her brother, and he was the chief source of her anxiety.

It were vain to attempt any description of the feelings of the whole party, when they were assured that Sarah Franklin was drowned. Their own grief was of itself a burthen almost intolerable; but how to bear home the melancholy tidings was a matter in which each and all of them trembled to embark. The tidings must, however, be communicated, and it was therefore resolved that Dr. Stanley should, in the first place, be made acquainted with the accident, and that it should be left to him to break, as

cautiously as he was able, to Colonel Franklin, the sad news of his daughter's fate. To make any more attempts to save her they were all aware would be useless; for she had been already more than half an hour in the water, and not the slightest trace of her could be discerned; so, after having vainly rowed backwards and forwards over the spot where she was last seen, for a considerable while longer, they left the boat to the care of the servants, and hurried home to the rectory on foot.

Here a scene took place such as the pencil of a West might perhaps represent, but which entirely defies any combination of language to describe. The horror of Dr. Stanley, mingled with his joy and thankfulness for the escape of Edward and Emily; the renewed lamentations of the distracted group; the wild stare of Mrs. Stanley, whose emotions were too powerful for utterance of any kind, form altogether such a scene as must be left to the imagination, if any notion is to be formed of it at all. But in their dismay at the fatal occurrence, Dr. and Mrs. Stanley were not unmindful of the comfortless and even perilous situation of the survivors. Edward and Emily were instantly put to bed,

and the other young people stole away, each set to its own home, as silently and dejectedly as if they had just been surprised in the perpetration of some crime, and were anxious to conceal themselves from the officers of justice.

Darkness had now set in, and Dr. Stanley felt that the painful task which was devolved upon him could no longer be deferred. He had already dispatched persons, in all directions, to drag the river; and now he took up his hat, and walked towards Spring Grove, with a step as slow and deliberate as the nature of the journey on which he proceeded was calculated to produce. He met the Colonel at the door of the house, whose anxiety on account of his daughter's lengthened absence would no longer permit him to remain within.

"Dr. Stanley," cried the alarmed father, with breathless eagerness, "how come you here? Where is Sarah? where is my child?"

"My good friend," replied the Doctor, "compose yourself. Come back with me into the house; I have something of consequence to communicate to you."

"Something to communicate!" — and he gasped as he spoke, — "then my fears are too

true. Some accident has befallen my darling. Is she much hurt?—or, O God! is she killed? Speak man," continued he, for the Doctor replied not to his interrogatory;—"speak at once, and tell me the whole truth: I am a man, and a soldier, and can bear it. My child is no more?"

"You have guessed but too correctly," replied the Doctor; "our darling has gone to a better world."

Colonel Franklin answered not. He dropped the Doctor's hand, which in his eagerness he had seized; he slowly elevated his eyes to heaven, and smiting his uplifted palms together, he rushed into the house.

Dr. Stanley followed him with all the speed which he could command, but the step of the Colonel was winged by desperation, and he therefore far outstripped his pursuer. When the Doctor overtook him he had gained his own study, and was sitting at a table, with the weight of his head rested upon his elbows, and his face buried in his hands. No tears fell from his burning eye-balls; no groan burst from his labouring bosom; he appeared, in fact, too much overwhelmed with grief to give vent to any of

those sounds or expressions by which sorrow less acute is usually accompanied. Dr. Stanley was not only shocked but alarmed at the object before him. "Alas! what have I done," cried he; "I trusted to his declaration of fortitude, and told my tale too abruptly. Colonel Franklin! my old, my valued friend! look up. Speak to me; it is I, your friend Stanley, who addresses you,—who tells you, that as a man, and as a Christian, you are bound to endure with patience the dispensations of Providence."

The Colonel heeded not this speech, but lifting up his face, and smiting his forehead with one hand, he exclaimed, "Gone, gone! my darling, the hope and comfort of my old age,—the child of my affections, in whose sight alone I lived! Is she gone,—and has she left this poor sapless old trunk to wither all alone! Oh, that I had laid my head in the grave before this blow came upon me!"

"Hear me, Colonel Franklin, hear me, I beseech you. Moderate this excessive grief, which amounts almost to sinfulness. Will all your lamentation bring her back again? You must go to her, but she cannot return to you."

"True, true, Dr. Stanley, you speak truly.

I must go to her. But where is she? Why have they not brought her here? Her pretty features, I trust, are not so disfigured but that I shall know them again. Come, come," continued he, starting up, "lead me to her. You say truly, if she cannot come to me I must go to her."

"You misunderstand me, my friend. It is not of seeing her in this world that I speak; — it is of your meeting beyond the grave, where you will never more be parted."

The Colonel gazed for a few seconds vacantly in his comforter's face, and then burst into tears. Dr. Franklin rejoiced most sincerely at beholding him weep; he made no attempt to check it, but let the burst of sorrow take its course, being perfectly aware that it would thus consume itself, and leave the poor childless father more composed. Having indulged for some time in the luxury of weeping, the Colonel at length so far mastered his emotions, as to enquire with considerable calmness into the circumstances of the case. These were faithfully detailed to him, as far as Dr. Stanley knew them, for he was ignorant that his son had sacrificed Sarah in order to preserve Emily; that being a secret

which was known only to the young people themselves. But when he learnt that his daughter's body had not yet been found, no persuasions of his old friend could prevail upon the Colonel to remain within doors. He flew to the river's brink; with his own hand he helped to pull the drag with which the river was searched, and after toiling all night, he had the melancholy satisfaction of bringing to shore all that remained of his once lovely daughter, at an early hour on the following morning. The sight of her pale corpse, swollen and blanched with lying so long in the water, instantly renewed the wildness of his grief. He tore out his thin grey hair by the roots, and scattered it to the winds; he threw himself upon her bosom, and covered her livid cheek with kisses; till at length the violence of his emotions overcame him, and he was carried home in a state apparently as free from suffering as that of his daughter.

During the whole time in which the body of Sarah lay at Spring Grove, Dr. Stanley never quitted the habitation of his friend by day or night. He sat with him, he talked to him, he accompanied him in his frequent visits to the chamber

of death; he did every thing, in short, which in such a case could be done to support the drooping spirits, and preserve the swollen heart from bursting. Nor were his kind attentions wholly wasted. The childless parent would weep as if he were himself a child, for an hour together beside the body; but he was much relieved by the tears which he shed. A painful task, however, still remained to be performed.—The image of a beloved object must be torn from the eyes which loved it, and a parent must be persuaded to consign the last of his race to the grave. Oh, reader! if thou hast known what it is to be deprived by death of some single being on whom thy fondest affections were fixed; if thou hast lost a wife, a parent, or, even more than these, an only child; thou wilt then know how dreadfully the feeling of utter desolateness is encreased, when even the lifeless body comes to be removed from the presence of the survivor. While the form is before our eyes, pale, cold, and inanimate though it be, we fancy that we are not totally deserted; but when the coffin has enshrouded it, when we listen to the hollow sounding of the earth upon its lid, and the voice of the clergyman who consigns "earth to earth,

dust to dust, ashes to ashes," then comes upon us, in all its force and bitterness, the assurance that we are alone; and fain, fain would we close our eyes upon the light of day, and lay us down beside the corpse of our beloved one, to share with it the dark bed in which it must slumber.

The sensations which I have thus imperfectly endeavoured to paint, were experienced to their utmost extent by Colonel Franklin on the day of Sarah's funeral. With a desperate resolution he followed her body to the grave; tearless and without a sigh he listened to the touching service for the burial of the dead, which was faltered out, rather than read, by his friend Dr. Stanley: he stood beside the grave till the sexton had piled up the earth to its mouth, and then turning slowly away, walked leisurely to Spring Grove. That day he shut himself up, even from Dr. Stanley. It appeared as if he were too busy to admit any one to his presence, or too much occupied by his own thoughts to endure the conversation, even of a friend and comforter. But next morning before the family at the rectory were stirring, the sound of carriage wheels was heard below the windows, and they found, upon inquiry, to their great astonishment, that Colonel

Franklin had quitted the country. He never returned: — he became a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and found no resting-place till he found it in the grave. Spring Grove was sold to a stranger, a wealthy manufacturer from Leeds, and it soon became to the family of Dr. Stanley a place known only by name.

CHAP. XII.

A TWILIGHT STROLL.

It were impossible to describe the sensation which the death of Sarah Franklin, and the departure of her father, produced in the neighbourhood of Preston. The old soldier had been respected and beloved by all to whom he was known; and as for Sarah, she was universally acknowledged to have been the prettiest and most sweet-tempered girl in the whole country-side. So highly, indeed, were both father and daughter esteemed by all the surrounding gentry, that on the Sunday which followed her funeral, there was not a family which appeared in church out of mourning, whilst, by the inmates of the rectory, their loss was deplored as a misfortune for which nothing could possibly make amends.

But among them all it was observed, and observed, at least by Margaret, partly with satisfaction, partly with regret, that the sorrow of Edward was the deepest. He never heard Sarah's name mentioned without suffering a

degree of agitation which plainly proved the excess of his grief; nay, there was, at times, a wildness and incoherence in his expressions, when the melancholy accident was referred to in conversation, which deeply shocked both his parents and sister. Nor did Margaret wonder less at beholding that this agitation of her brother's was not only not chided, but that it was even shared by Emily. This last circumstance was to her matter of great astonishment. From Edward's behaviour she conceived, that the partiality of his boyhood had been beginning to flourish anew, and that he mourned the death of Sarah as the blight of his affections; but why Emily should join in his excessive sorrow — Emily, who whilst the poor girl was alive had proved very plainly by her manner that she loved not to see Edward in her company — this was to her a mystery which she could not unravel.

The fact, however, was, that Edward and Emily were both of them aware of a circumstance attending poor Sarah's death, of which every other person was ignorant; — namely, that she perished when she might have been saved, but for the intervention of another. And

though it was extremely natural, that an uncle should preserve his niece in preference to a stranger, in circumstances where it was impossible to save both, still the consciences of Edward and Emily reproached them as if they had been in some degree the occasion of their friend's death. Edward could not but look back with horror upon the indifference, nay, the eagerness, with which he cast away a trembling being who depended upon him for life itself; nor could Emily forgive the want of generosity which prompted her to accept his profered aid, aware, as she all the while was, that it was given at the expense of another's safety.

But the gloom which these reflections cast over their minds, if it rendered them less agreeable in their general deportment towards others, drew them closer and closer to each other. "And it was for me, Edward, that you deserted Sarah. It was me of whom you thought in the hour of danger, and for whose preservation alone you were interested. Oh, Edward, how can I thank you, how can I prove the extent of my love and gratitude!"

"Talk not of gratitude to me, dear Emily;

give me your love, but offer no gratitude, for what would life have been to me had you perished! But, oh, Emily, would to God Sarah too had been saved!"

Such was the language which this young and romantic couple used towards each other. As yet, nothing more warm, nothing more nearly bordering upon the phraseology of love, had passed between them. They were still brother and sister, — their feelings were ardent, but pure, — no thought of happiness crossed their minds beyond the idea of spending their lives together, and spending them, as they were passed at the rectory, in the most innocent and unrestrained intercourse. But a state of things such as this could not long continue; they had trusted themselves too far, — they were already upon the brink of a precipice, — it required but one single step more to plunge them down its gulf.

The period allotted to Edward, as leave of absence from his corps, had been originally two months; of this only three weeks now remained to be spent at home. Of course, the days now began to be numbered with a feeling of deep and anxious painfulness. Three weeks,

— what were three short weeks ? — they would pass away like a vision of the night, — and, oh, how cheerless was all the time beyond them !

It was the month of August, and the weather so oppressively hot, that all walking in the middle of the day was laid aside. The evenings were now the seasons devoted to exercise, and one of the favourite walks of Edward and his companions was along the river's brink, towards the place where the fatal pic-nic party had been held. One evening, when the three short weeks were already diminished to two and a half, Margaret was affected by an attack of toothache, and declined accompanying Edward and Emily on their ramble. The two friends accordingly set forth alone, and they took the path to which they were most attached, and which conducted to the grove just mentioned. It was one of those delightful evenings in autumn, when the heat of the day being past, all nature begins to recover from its lethargy, — when the flowers lift their drooping heads, and the blackbirds send out their rich clear notes from every bush, — when the air is filled with insects whose humming noise speaks music to the ear of the loiterer. — It was on such

a night as this, that Edward and Emily set out together, for a lonely walk. This was perhaps the first time that they had ever walked out unaccompanied by Margaret. They therefore felt as if a restraint were removed from them; and yet it was that kind of restraint with which, perhaps, they would have been better pleased to be encumbered, though the encumbrance would at the same time have been accompanied with pain. They walked on for some time in silence. The majestic Thames rolled his waters by their side, their feet pressed down the rich green sod with which his banks are covered; a grove of ash, willow, and poplar trees waved over their heads, and sent forth from among its branches the most delightful harmony.

"What an evening is this!" Edward at length broke the silence by observing. "O Emily, how soon the time will come when I must no longer share such evenings with you."

Emily could not answer, for her feelings overpowered her. The silent tears ran down her cheeks, till one dropped upon the hand of her companion. "Nay, weep not my love, my own dear Emily! Let us not think or talk of part-

ing now. That will come too soon a fortnight hence. Come, love, cheer up and kiss me."

Edward's arm stole insensibly round her waste, — involuntarily she turned to him her lips, and he pressed them to his own. — They now moved on till they had reached a spot completely overshadowed with broom and hawthorn. The bower was too inviting to be past, so they entered it, and sat down, her head resting upon his shoulder, his right arm encircling her waste, and his left hand clasped between hers. The sun had set some time, and the last gloom of twilight was over them. Insensibly their thoughts reverted to the approaching departure of the soldier, and became as dark and sombre as the shade in which they sat. "But you will write to me, Emily, and I to you; we shall thus converse, at least by letter; and let there not be a thought in the heart of the one, of which the other shall be kept ignorant.

" Do you then imagine that I have a thought in my heart, Edward, of which you are ignorant. Oh, if you could but see it naked before you you would know —

" What should I know, dear Emily, that I do

not know already. Emily, it is folly to close our eyes to the truth; we love, and that wildly, and madly; our love is not that of brother and sister; no, no,—we have blinded our eyes too long. Emily, let us fly this spot, let us part and never see each other again. We shall be miserable, but let us not be guilty."

Edward spoke, but he stirred not. His eye fell upon that of the lovely creature who reclined pale and agitated in his arms: they were both silent,—their breath grew thick:—need I say more.

CHAP. XIII.

BROKEN RESOLVES.

"The misery of the damned is surely light," continued Mr. Stanley's own disjointed narrative, "in comparison of the feelings which I experienced when I recovered from the delirium of that guilty moment." The wretched culprits dared not look each other in the face. Humbled, even to the dust, they sat gazing wildly around them, in speechless, almost in breathless agony. "Come, Emily," Edward at length said in a hollow voice, "come, let us return." But there was a fire in her brain which burnt up all sense of external objects. She heeded him not for some minutes; and when he repeated the request in a louder tone, she burst into an hysteric laugh. "Yes, come," cried she, springing frantically on her feet; "come, let us go and tell our parents how pure and how good we are." Edward rose at the same time, and advanced towards her. He would have spoken in a voice of cheering and consolation if he could, but the words died away into inarticulate sounds, and he

gazed upon her in silence. "Why do you not move?" continued she, wildly. "Is it not enough? Am I not undone? What more would you have?"

"Oh Emily!" at length Edward exclaimed, "speak not to me thus; I am miserable, most miserable already. O add not your upbraidings to the load of remorse which I bear!"

The tone of his voice produced an instant effect upon Emily. Her eye lost its frenzied stare; she fixed it upon him intently for an instant, then, bursting into a violent flood of tears, she fell sobbing upon his neck. "Upbraid you, Edward! Oh no. Why should I upbraid *you?* What evil have *you* done in which *I* have not participated? Nay, was not I the tempter?—O, Edward, forgive *me!*"

"Ask not forgiveness of me, my own loved Emily; but O let us both ask forgiveness of Heaven!"

Unconsciously they both fell upon their knees. They prayed with earnestness for pardon and peace; and they rose from the earth, if not tranquil, at least less wretched than they were before. But the thought of meeting the eyes of the family was a fearful one. Their consciences whispered that guilt was written on their foreheads, and they

dared not hope that its characters would not be read; yet they so far overcame their terror, as to appear very little less composed at the supper-table than they were wont to be, and they joined in the family prayers with a degree of bitter devotion, such as is felt only by a sinner who has repented.

The resolutions into which this guilty pair entered that night, and the vows which they swore before their Maker of future innocence, were worthy of the degree of remorse which they really experienced for the past. As to Edward, he felt that a whole life of purity could not make amends for the guilt, or wipe out the pollution of one hour, because the object towards whom the most serious of all injuries had been committed was Emily. But with Emily the laws both of God and man forbade that he should ever unite his fate. She was his near relative, the daughter of his sister, and the grand-child of his mother; and yet he doated upon her with a strength of passion rather aggravated than diminished, and felt more fully than ever, that life itself possessed not a single attraction to him without her. Restless and uneasy, he tossed about upon a sleepless bed;

and when he rose next morning, his haggard visage and pale cheek indicated very clearly in what manner the night had been spent.

Nor was Emily more composed during the hours of darkness. She slept in the same bed with Margaret, and the agitation of her frame kept her bed-fellow awake during the whole of the night. If by chance Emily dropped into a doze, visions of guilt and horror rose into her view; she sobbed and wept upon her pillow — she murmured the name of Edward, and coupled it with the most horrible allusions — then she would clasp her companion to her bosom, and pray that her life might be spared, and that time might be given for repentance. In short, the countenances of these young people, when they met their parents at the breakfast table, presented the most perfect indices of troubled minds, and terrified imaginations.

Margaret was a girl of the purest thoughts, and the most innocent feelings, but she would have been false to nature, had not the events of the preceding night startled her into dreadful suspicions. These suspicions, however, be they what they might, she kept to herself. She never so much as alluded to the disordered pro-

ceedings of Emily's dreams; not even from the dreamer herself did she require an explanation; but she determined to keep all her eyes about her, and to prevent every attempt at private interviews between Emily and her brother.

In forming this determination Margaret was actuated by the purest, and even the most prudential motives; but she was an unskilful dissembler. Her manner towards the culprits underwent a change, of which, though she herself perceived it not, they could not fail to take notice. Suspicion lurked in her eye, and moved in her tread. Her mode of breaking in upon them was abrupt, and direct. Not for an instant, if she knew it, would she suffer them to enjoy each other's converse; and even the glances of their eyes were unceasingly watched. Margaret, in short, over-acted her part; and by aiming at too much, failed in securing any thing.

As long as the bitterness of remorse hung over the minds of the guilty ones, in all its intensity, this watchfulness of Margaret's was either wholly disregarded by them, or viewed rather with satisfaction than otherwise. But the tooth of the worm began, before long, to gnaw less acutely. In proportion as this took place, an

undue confidence in themselves gradually sprang up in the room of their former self-humiliation, and they began to regard Margaret rather as an intruder than a guardian.

"Am I never to be alone with her again?" said Edward to himself, just after Margaret had surprised them together, and taken Emily away with her on some pretence or another. "Will this execrable system of espionage be kept up for ever? By heavens, I'll bear it no longer! I will see her alone, even if I should meet her by midnight!"

Into this desire of meeting, it must be confessed, that Emily entered with equal alacrity; but how they were to contrive it was the difficulty. Emily and Margaret slept together; the one could not therefore steal out of the chamber by night, without being observed by the other; but in the morning, Emily generally rose an hour or two before the other members of the family, for the purpose of prosecuting her studies. This then was the time for meeting. But where were they to meet? In the parlour they were liable to interruptions from the servants; and what they desired in meeting, was only to open their minds to each other, and to

enter into solemn engagements in each other's presence, not to sin again. This would require a private chamber, and there was none more likely to be private than Edward's own.

In it therefore the meetings took place; and let justice be done, — they were, for a whole week, such as the angels in heaven might have witnessed with approbation.

But, alas! what do the best resolutions avail, when opportunities come in the way for the indulgence of an engrossing passion. The penitents were again guilty, — they were again wretched; — but they went on for some time sinning and repenting, till finally they ceased to pray for God's grace to help them. Not that their minds were even now sunk into an hardened indifference to the guilt of their proceedings, or their feelings seared against the pangs of remorse. Quite the reverse. There existed not upon the face of the earth a more miserable pair than Edward and Emily, though their wildest wishes were accomplished, and their fondest desires fulfilled. And such must ever be the case, when our wishes and our duty run counter the one to the other. Without the gratification of the former, life has no value; and

when the latter is disregarded, it becomes a positive burthen. Many a time did this wretched couple beseech God, upon their bended knees, either to deliver them from the enchantment in which they were bound, or to take from them a life which was passed only in guilt. But their prayers were unheeded, as they deserved to be, because they took no steps themselves towards securing the blessing petitioned for.

CHAP. XIV.

FAREWELL.

THE day at length drew near, which, for the present at least, must end the guilty intercourse between Edward and Emily, — and, oh, what a day was that! On the evening preceding, he had bid adieu to his father and mother; because the stage-coach would pass at an early hour, and it was unnecessary to break in upon their slumbers. But Emily and Margaret would see him off, and they were accordingly seated together in the parlour when he descended from his bed-room. They were both bathed in tears, but the tears which Emily shed were larger, more round, and fell at greater intervals than those shed by Margaret. Emily's eyes, likewise, did not close to drive them forth, they were extended to their full stretch, and tear after tear formed and fell, without any pressure of the eye-lid. With respect to Edward, his eyes were dry, but they were red and hot as burning coals, and the pulses of his forehead

beat as if the blood would have burst through the skin, and fallen in a shower upon the breakfast-table.

Of the viands which were set before him, Edward did not taste; but rising abruptly from his seat, he proposed that they should walk forward, and let the coach overtake them on the road. To this the ladies agreed in silence; and in silence they set forth. Not a word was spoken by any of the party, their very tears ceased to flow, till Margaret stooped down, and kissing Flora, again burst into a passion of weeping. At this moment the rumbling of the coach was heard. It soon made its appearance, and Edward snatching one desperate embrace, first of his sister, and afterwards of Emily, took his dog in his hand and vaulted upon the roof.

He dared not look behind, till just as the vehicle approached a turning in the road, which must shut out from his view all that he loved upon earth. Then he cast one trembling glance towards the spot where he had parted from them. He saw Emily standing in the very same attitude in which he had left her, her neck stretched out as if fearful of losing even one glimpse of the carriage, as long as it might

be discernible. The handkerchief of Margaret was at her eyes, which showed that she was weeping, and with her left hand she seemed endeavouring to pull Emily away from the spot, to which she adhered as firmly as if rooted there. Such were the attitudes in which Edward last beheld them; for before they could be changed, the coach made the turning in the road, and they disappeared.

And it was long before Margaret succeeded in leading Emily from the place where Edward had left her. Her whole soul seemed to have gone with the vehicle which bore him away; for even when she yielded to the gentle violence of her conductor, it was in a state of stupid silence, of which I have no words to convey a notion. She wept not, she spoke not, her limbs moved, as it appeared, involuntarily; till her labouring bosom at length relieved itself by the utterance of a long deep-drawn sigh, which sounded as if it came from the very bottom of a heart, in which happiness might never again hope to find a habitation.

On their return to the Rectory, they found that the good old couple were stirring, and the knowledge of this compelled Emily to wear a

face of greater contentment. But to her all sources of real enjoyment were dried up. Her whole delight was henceforth in solitude, in lonely walks by the river's side, particularly towards the bower, where first they confessed their love and became guilty; whilst it was no uncommon thing to discover her seated on the grave of Sarah Franklin, whose untimely fate she made no secret of envying.

This altered behaviour of her niece only confirmed the worst suspicion that Margaret had ever formed concerning her. She was now thoroughly convinced that a hopeless passion existed between Edward and Emily; she even feared that the knowledge of their loves had not been concealed by the one from the other, but as to any thing beyond this, her innocent mind never so much as dreamt of it. She therefore felt for Emily all that pity which a sense of rectitude, perhaps somewhat too stern, would permit her to feel, and she suppressed, as far as she was able, every display of indignation, casting over her general manner even more of kindness and gentleness than it had for some time back exhibited towards her niece. Emily was conscious of this change, and she was at no

loss to guess its cause; but whilst she felt grateful for the attentions of her aunt, the force which was sometimes requisite to produce them, did not escape her penetrating eye; nor was she at any time so far softened by them, as to be drawn into a betrayal of any part of her sad secret.

In the mean-while Edward pursued his journey, a prey to all those painful and distracting feelings, which his wretched and hopeless situation could not fail to produce. He dared not look back, for there every thing was coloured by the consciousness of guilt; he dared not look forward, for there was no ray of hope to enliven the gloom in which futurity was enveloped. But it was not alone on account of the utter impossibility of his ever calling Emily his own, that the future held out to his mind's eye only shapes and forms of terror. Another cause of apprehension could not be concealed from himself. Who could tell how long it would be possible to keep, even the past, from the eyes of the world? But if these his worst fears should prove well founded, what was to be done? A thousand and a thousand plans rose and departed from his bewildered brain. At one time

he thought of flying with her to a remote part of the kingdom, and marrying her, with the knowledge of his father, — then again a horrible idea crossed his mind, of abortion caused by violence, — but this he instantly chased away, nor suffered it, even for a moment, to keep its place there. Lastly he thought of suicide, a double suicide, of drinking poison together, and expiring in each other's arms, — till his imagination became worked up to a pitch of frenzy, and he almost regretted that the step had not been already taken. But in the midst of all these selfish arrangements, for selfish they most assuredly were, recollections of his parents and of his sister obtruded themselves. He saw before him the forms of the first bending under the weight of misery into the grave, and cursing the ungrateful boy who had cut short their days by his misconduct; then he beheld his sister, the companion of his childhood, once the friend of his bosom, converted into a thing at which the finger of scorn pointed, and treated with disdain, because she was the sister of a wretch like himself. These last were pictures, upon which, engrossed as he was with selfish sorrows, he could not bear to dwell; he there-

fore strove to dismiss the subject entirely from his thoughts for the present; and comforting himself by the recollection that as yet no grounds existed for his worst fear, he determined, should any afterwards occur, to be guided in his behaviour by chance or by circumstances. Having formed this wise resolution, a resolution, I believe, very general with young men who find themselves in the midst of difficulties from which they can discover no direct outlet, he continued his journey in somewhat a more composed state of mind, and reached the town at which his regiment was quartered, even more tranquil than might have been naturally expected.

CHAP. XV.

AN ALARM.

But the tranquillity which a feeling of animal motion had tended in no slight degree to produce, soon began to be broken in upon by thoughts of care and anxiety, when he once more found himself a member of the regimental mess. For the lively, but unmeaning conversation of his brother officers, he had lost all relish. Their stale jokes, repeated for the hundred and fiftieth time, their stories equally stale, because equally familiar, fell upon his deadened ear, like the gravest passages in the chaplain's sermons. They excited in him no disposition to laughter, nor any inclination to add to the merriment of others, by helping out their common-place puns and observations, by a few original flashes of his own. He to whom the whole mess-table was wont to look, as the life of their meeting, and their sure refuge against ennui, had himself become the dullest of the dull. As soon as dinner was ended, he

rose and quitted the room. He declined every invitation to punch and other parties in the barrack-rooms, and keeping wholly by himself, in a very little time lost all his title to the appellation of "Merry Stanley."

At first this change in his manner was treated as in itself a subject of amusement. He was bantered, questioned, and quizzed, till a temper, by no means the most calm, was in some danger of being ruffled; and at last, his companions observing that this mode of proceeding produced not the desired effect, gradually laid it aside, and left him to indulge the bent of his own humour. And he did indulge it to the the utmost. He never spoke to any one more than was absolutely necessary; he abandoned all his companions, both in walking and riding; either strolling out alone, by the most unfrequented paths which he could discover, or remaining at home in his own apartments, to brood over real and imaginary sorrows.

Edward had been with his regiment about three weeks, when the intelligence that his father was attacked by a dangerous disorder, summoned him instantly to return to Preston. Alas! it can hardly be said, that he set about

his preparations for the journey with a mind wholly occupied by thoughts of his parent's illness. I do not say that these thoughts did not occur to him, and bring with them a just proportion of alarm and anxiety; but there were others which obtruded themselves much more frequently. In a little while he should again be with his Emily; and whilst she was near him, what was the misfortune under which he would bend?

The complaint with which Dr. Stanley had been seized, though violent, and presenting, for a short time, the most alarming symptoms, was not of long continuance. It was pleurisy, a disease which, if it does its business at all, does it quickly; but Dr. Stanley's constitution was such as to bear and repel the first grand attack, and hence, when Edward reached Preston, he was in a state of convalescence. The joy of the young soldier at this event was perfectly sincere; but it was a sensation light and trifling, when compared with what he felt in embracing the partner of his guilt.

As the leave which Edward had obtained was only for a fortnight, it will readily be believed

that the unfortunate pair made the most of their time. The attention of Margaret was of necessity much occupied by attending upon her father; the lovers had consequently every opportunity of being together. And, oh! that was such a fortnight as neither of them might hope to spend again — when there was just so much of restraint upon them as to give a zest to their stolen interviews, and not sufficient to interrupt the enjoyment of those interviews when they were obtained. But as the time drew on when he must again depart, a sadness and despondency, much greater than even those which attended her before, were discernible in the countenance and manner of Emily. Even the conversation of Edward was unable to cheer her. In their lonely walks she was silent and moody, and many a time, when he has stolen into her apartment, with joy in his eyes, and delight in his heart, he found her in tears.

Hurt and dismayed at this alteration in her conduct, he questioned her minutely as to the cause.— "Have I offended you, Emily, or have you ceased to love me? Has any one crossed your path whom you would prefer to me? If

so, declare the truth at once; for it is better to resign you altogether, than to share your affections with another."

"Oh, Edward, how can you ask these questions? Have I not given you proof enough that I love you? — Yes; — more than body or soul, or any thing in this world or the next. Do not grieve me by repeating that which your own heart must answer."

"Dearest Emily," cried Edward, clasping her to his bosom, "I do not in reality doubt — I never did — I could not doubt you. But why all this selfish grief? What is there that pains you which I must not know?"

It was on the evening previous to his setting out that the above conversation passed. The cause of despondency, be it what it would, must be communicated to-day, if it was to be communicated at all. He therefore urged her to be explicit, though his heart misgave him as he repeated his enquiries; nor can it be said that he was either surprised, or deprived of all self-command, when he learnt that the worst fear which had affected him was in all probability well grounded.

Whilst there is life, there is hope, is an old

adage, and as just as it is ancient. As yet there was no positive certainty of the truth of their suspicions, and Edward eagerly grasped at the possibility of her being mistaken in her apprehensions. He even reasoned with her on the probability that the case was so; but at the same time admitted, that the reverse must be provided against. But how to provide against it? there lay the difficulty. On the one hand, the peace of a whole family must be destroyed by their elopement; on the other, the character and happiness of Emily must be sacrificed by the adoption of any other course. Now, who that loves as Edward loved — who, I mean, with a mind equally uncontrolled by reason and a sense of practical religion, would have hesitated for an instant on whom the evil was to fall? Edward did not. He immediately bound her, by the most solemn oath, to communicate with him as soon as suspicion should be converted into certainty; and he determined to sacrifice himself, and all the world besides, should such a sacrifice be necessary, for her sake.

These matters being fully arranged, the lovers repaired to the supper-room, where, for the first

time since his indisposition, they found Dr. Stanley seated. It was with the utmost difficulty that Edward could command himself sufficiently to congratulate his father on this proof of his speedy recovery; but, from the moment that he had seated himself beside the table, all self-command forsook him. In those primitive days it was no unusual thing for the male members of a family like Dr. Stanley's, to solace themselves after their substantial evening meal with a beaker of toddy, and even for the females to accept a wine-glassful of that grateful beverage, ladled out from the tumblers of the gentlemen. At the rectory of Preston this good old custom was faithfully upheld; and, on the present occasion, bottles full of brandy and Geneva were placed upon the table. To prevent himself from sinking altogether, Edward eagerly seized the nearest of these. He poured out glassful after glassful of the unmixed spirit, and swallowed it so hastily, that no time was given so much as to wonder at the strangeness of the proceeding. In a very little while the spirit began to take effect. Then a voice was given to him, and that a fearful voice; for he dropped such hints, and made such confessions, in all the madness of inebriety,

that his relations, who before had sat still in amazement, were now motionless with horror.

As soon as this began to take place, Emily retired, fearful lest her own agitation might betray the truth. Edward saw her go. "I have ruined her!" he exclaimed, "and I am myself undone!" Again he poured such a quantity of brandy into his tumbler, that had not the hand been arrested which held it to his lips, in all probability the dose would have been as effectual as if he had swallowed the most deadly poison. But he drank enough to inflame his blood with the fever of actual delirium. He sprang from his chair, and rushing up stairs, made directly to the table on which lay his razors; but before he could reach it, the more nimble step of Margaret had defeated his purpose. With the speed of lightning she followed her brother to his chamber, she darted past him, as he reeled towards the spot where the deadly weapons lay, and snatching them up, handed them instantly to her father, who had followed the steps of his children as fast as his great weakness would permit.

With the utmost difficulty Edward was at length persuaded to go to bed. He wept, he

tore his hair, he exhibited every symptom of insanity, but Margaret, his mother, and his father surrounded him. They stripped him of his clothes, and having fairly put him to bed, they waited by the side of it till the liquor operated as a narcotic, and they beheld him placed for the present out of all danger, by falling into a profound slumber. They took, however, the precaution to remove from his reach every weapon or sharp instrument by which the desperate act, which he seemed to have meditated, might be committed; and having left his door ajar, and adopted every other course likely to render it impossible for him to move without creating an alarm, they departed, not to repose, but to spend the night in watchfulness and fearful conjectures.

CHAP. XVI.

A BARRACK-ROOM.

Next morning when Edward awoke, his mind was so thoroughly stupified by the fumes of the preceding night's potations, that for a while his thoughts could revert to nothing, besides the sensation of severe and immediate bodily suffering. He could not lift his head from the pillow. Dark clouds floated before his eyes, and every object within the apartment appeared to go round; whilst an overpowering nausea preyed upon his stomach, and before long produced a violent attack of sickness.

Relieved in some measure by this, he at length mustered courage to rise, and the cool air which blew upon him from the opened window, gradually restored him to more tolerable bodily feelings. But as the uneasiness of the animal system receded, the agony of his mind returned, and he was speedily alive to all the difficulties of his situation, and to all the tormenting consciousness of despair.

When he descended to the breakfast-parlour he found it empty. Breakfast was already laid for him, but neither Margarėt nor Emily made her appearance, so he swallowed a cup of coffee in solitary wretchedness, and attended only by his faithful spaniel, set out on his way to the coach-office. His journey was performed in a frame of mind more dark and gloomy than had yet possessed him. There were about him now, no starts and throes of desperate mental suffering; no moments of harrowing reflections, followed by others of lighter and more pleasing meditations. This state of mixed grief was over, and he had now, as he imagined, attained to the most perfect calmness of despair.

He had not proceeded above half-way, however, towards head-quarters, when he began to feel the most oppressive, and painful sensations throughout the whole of his frame. His temples throbbed, his eye-balls burned, his head felt as if it were composed of a solid ball of lead, so heavy and difficult was it to support; shooting pains pierced from between his shoulders to his chest, — in short he was already attacked by a violent fever, and was lifted from the vehicle and borne into his quarters, in a state

of delirium. In this condition he remained for two days, without exhibiting any signs of recovery, or any proof of reason, till at length exhausted nature could bear up no longer, and relieved herself by a long deep slumber. From this he awoke greatly better and quite collected; but with the return of his intellects, a remembrance of his miseries kept pace.

Among all the officers who, in the days of his health and gaiety, had fluttered round him, only one, a Major Campbell, adhered to him in the time of his distress. Major Campbell, as the name denotes, was a native of the highlands of Scotland, a man of rough exterior, but of the most noble and generous dispositions. He was the youngest son of Sir Colin Campbell, of the isle of Sky, an old Scotch baronet, as poor as he was proud. — He had quitted his paternal roof at the early age of fourteen for the camp and barrack-room, and though a soldier of fortune, he contrived, by the time he was forty, to attain to the rank of a major. This brave veteran had taken a sort of paternal charge of Edward ever since his joining the corps. He bore with all his petulance, he offered him on every occasion his advice and assistance, and whenever the

young soldier was in a scrape, which by the the way took place not unfrequently, the old major (as Campbell was called) was sure to be resorted to, to bring him out of it. In such cases the cool-headedness of the Scotchman was found worth all the fire of the Englishman; and many a time has the former delivered the latter from situations, through which, had he not been at hand to succour him, the young man must have at least forfeited his commission.

Major Campbell had witnessed with sincere regret the great change which Edward's habits had undergone, ever since he went upon leave of absence for the first time. Like others of the corps, he at first tried the effect of raillery, to bring back his young favourite to his former mode of proceeding; but seeing, as others saw, that raillery had no effect upon him, he next attempted reasoning, till that too proved itself vain. Repulsed by the unkind and even insolent manner in which his well-meant enquiries were met, he had ceased to make any more for the last few days previous to Edward's second journey to Preston; but he determined to renew his attempts at discovering the sources of the boy's dejection, as soon as he should

return, and to move heaven and earth for the purpose of dispelling them.

The day on which Edward's leave would expire, was well known at the regiment, and Major Campbell was accordingly stationed at the inn-door to receive him as soon as he should alight from the coach. But to alight, at least of his own accord, was a task which Edward could not perform. He attempted it, but such was the weakness of his limbs, that his knees bent under him, and he must have fallen headlong upon the pavement, but for the timely intervention of a fellow-passenger's arm. Campbell was shocked at beholding his altered visage. A few soldiers who chanced to be straggling in the street, were instantly summoned to his aid, and young Stanley was carried upon their shoulders to his room, where the Major saw him instantly put to bed, and the surgeon sent for.

From that time, till the moment of his recovering his senses, Major Campbell hardly ever stirred from the side of his bed. He tended him with all the affectionate solicitude of a mother; he administered to him his drugs, and wept for joy when he saw them produce the effect of bringing him once more to himself.

But even then, he ceased not to offer to the convalescent all those delicate attentions, which, for the most part, a female alone can bestow; and he rejoiced as sincerely, at witnessing his gradual recovery, as if the young man had been his own brother, or his own son. Nor was Edward insensible to the kindness of his brave old Scottish friend. He thanked him in the eloquent language of truth; but he delighted the Major most of all by showing, that, in his company at least, he could be occasionally cheerful.

Three weeks had passed without bringing with them any terrible intelligence from Preston. Edward was already able to quit his chamber, and though still weak, could even manage, in fine days, to ride a mile or two from the barrack on horseback. Hope once more was beginning to shed a ray upon his benighted spirit, when one morning he found upon his breakfast-table a letter, addressed in a hand which could not be mistaken, and addressed to himself. The eagerness with which Edward snatched it up, beggars all description; but he was totally unable to break the seal. His hand shook so, that when he attempted it the letter fell to the

ground, and such was his agitation, that many minutes elapsed before he was able so much as to stoop and pick it up. He paced his room several times from one corner to another, keeping his eyes fixed, all the while, upon the fatal bit of paper which lay in the middle of the floor; till at length summoning to his aid a desperate resolution, he hastily grasped it and broke the seal. It was written in the deepest agitation; it breathed the very spirit of grief and dejection; it spoke of the agonized feelings of the writer, not so much upon her own account, as upon his, and it confirmed the dreadful suspicion which the lapse of a fortnight was beginning to obliterate from his mind. Edward read thus far, but could read no farther. The letter dropped once more from his hand, his breathing ceased, and he fainted.

He had lain in this state some time when Major Campbell entered the room. Terrified at the condition in which he found his friend, the Major called lustily for help, and his cries having brought Edward's servant to his assistance, the sick man was lifted from the floor, and placed upon the bed. But they had scarcely laid him there when his senses returned,

and opening his eyes he stared wildly in Campbell's face.

"Where is the letter?" cried he; "give it me, that I may read it again, and expire in its perusal."

"My puir bairn," said the Major, "dinna tak on sae about the Lord kens what. Gin this letter hae sæ muckle ill news in't as to gar ye faint, my certe I think the best thing we can do wi't will be to fling it in the fire."

"For your life do not destroy it. Give it me, — nay only let me read it once to an end, and hang it in my bosom, that its weight may kill me."

Campbell could not resist his friend's earnest entreaties, so he gave him the letter. Edward devoured its contents with his eyes, and became at the close of its perusal so calm, as absolutely to astonish his kind-hearted attendant.

"A weel my man," said Campbell, "it maun be a queer sort of a hodge-podge, that letter o' your's — for first it makes you faint, and rave like a madman, and sine it makes you as peaceable as a lamb. For my part, I think it maun be a bit bellet doox, — something frae a

bonny lassy, wi' paulky blue een, and gowden hair, — is na that it noo?"

Edward did not reply, but rose from his bed. He assured the Major that he was now quite himself again, and begged to be left alone, for a few minutes, as he had one or two letters of consequence to write. "And what for canna ye write them, and me beside you? do you think I'm going to peep out o'er your shouther, as the tae Irishman did to the tither in the tavern at Cork? Na, na, I have nae sik tricks about me; so ye maun een sit down here, whiles I glowr out at the window, for there is a bit deevil in the corner of your left ee that wonna let me leave you by yourself."

Edward had already dismissed his servant, and he now entreated the Major to follow him: "Will you then have the goodness only to step into the next room? You will hear there every thing that I am about, and yet you will be no restraint upon me."

Against this request the Major knew not very well how to stand out. He accordingly stepped into the room where Edward's breakfast table stood; and having supplied his young friend with pen, ink, and paper, he walked up

and down past the door which communicated between them, never proceeding more than two feet, either from its lock or its hinges.

As soon as Major Campbell was gone, Edward seated himself at his dressing table, and began two letters, one to his father, and the other to Emily. In the first he made a full confession of their guilt; he implored his father's forgiveness in the most touching terms, beseeching him to protect the partner of his crime, and her wretched offspring; finally, he entreated him to offer up his prayers for a soul, which by the time the letter should have reached its destination, would be before its Judge. In his letter to Emily, again, he spoke of his love, and of his misery. He told her that he could not bear the shame of an exposure; that life had for him no further attractions; that he was heart-broken, and had determined to die. "This," continued he, "is upon mature deliberation the best course to be pursued by both of us. If you survive me, my father, I know, will protect you; but what will you be? A mark for all the shafts of malice, and all the bitterness of evil tongues. Oh, Emily, die, and we shall meet again beyond the grave."

These being finished, he proceeded to pen a note for Major Campbell. He besought him to take care of Flora for his sake; to burn all his papers, with the single exception of the last letter which he had received; and to bury it in the same grave with himself, together with a lock of hair, which was enclosed in a glass case, and hung suspended by a black ribbon round his neck.

"Now," cried Edward, unconsciously speaking aloud, "all my worldly business is over; and God have mercy on my soul." A pistol lay in the drawer of the table loaded with powder, and the balls which fitted it lay beside it. Edward grasped the weapon, and was in the act of cramming a ball into its barrel, when Campbell, on whose ear the sound of his voice had not fallen in vain, burst open the room door, and dashed the pistol from his hand.

"Stanley, are you a fool, or a coward, or both? Have you faced the enemy so often, and are you afraid to face a few earthly ills? Do you not fear much more to face your God when he is angry?"

These words were delivered with all the energy which such an occasion was calculated to excite in the manner of the speaker; Edward

answered them not. His face was already deadly pale; his nerves, which had been wound up to their utmost pitch, gave way all at once, on his purpose being defeated; he staggered towards the bed, and falling upon it, lay for several seconds, not in a fit, but deprived of all power to move or to speak. Major Campbell, in the mean time, threw the pistol over the window, and having allowed the young man several minutes to recover from his lethargy, and to collect his scattered powers of mind, he sat down by his side, and thus addressed him.

CHAP. XVII.

ARRANGEMENTS.

"STANLEY, my brave good boy, ye ken full well that ever since you joined the regiment I have been your friend. In aw your scrapes and difficulties I hae stood by you, and God kens I hae derived as mickle satisfaction, or may be mair, in setting you right again, than you, ye ungrateful loon, hae felt at being set right by me. Now I canna help thinking, that after aw this experience of my good will towards ye, ye dinna just treat me as I deserve to be treated, when ye hide frae me a cause of trouble evidently our heavy for you to bear your lain. God's sake man, what for do you no speak out? How do you ken but what even here I might befriend you?"

"Oh, Campbell!" replied Edward, now melted down in spirit to the softness and pliability of a child; "the grief which oppresses me is such as no human means can ever alleviate, far less dispel. Why then should I

distress you by communicating a tale which you will not hear without execrating and despising me."

"How ken ye that, my bonny boy? I am mikle mistaen in ye if ever ye can hae done a thing that will bring disgrace upon yourself or any of your connections; and were the contrary the fact, why we maun try to make the best o't, be your mishap what it may. Ise warrand now there is a lassie in the gait. Oh, thæ petticoats! they play the very deevil wi' young heads and smooth faces."

Edward, it has been observed, was softened down to the weakness of a child. There was in Campbell's manner so much of kindness, and real generosity, that coupling it with a recollection of the important service he had just received from him, our hero could not resist it. He accordingly opened to him his whole soul. He concealed from him nothing, and handing him Emily's letter to peruse, hid his own face in the bed-clothes till the perusal should end.

When he had spelt the letter to its close, a task which could not be performed by an Highland gentleman of those days in a moment, Major Campbell whistled part of a pibroch, and

walked up and down the apartment for some moments without speaking. At length he stopped beside Edward, and without suffering the tone of his voice to change in the smallest degree, except perhaps that it assumed somewhat more of encouragement and liveliness than it had before, he said: "By my faith, laddy, but this is the worst scrape ye hae gotten into yet; but though it be bad, that's nae reason why ye should na get out o'it. As to blowing your own brains out, as ye were thinking o' doing just enow, in my opinion that wad only mak things war; for supposing you snugly set aside, or as we say, laid on the skelf, in the grave, what's to become o' the puir lassy? And then there's your father, man, and your mither, and your sister, for whom ye profess sae mikle regard, do ye really suppose that any thing that could befall you would gie them half sae mikle concern, as your taking awa your ain life?— Dinna suppose it, man; they love you, nae doubt, for your ain sake; and it wad break their very hearts to learn, that ye had done such a desperate action. Besides, Stanley, mind that there's a God in Heaven, and that every other sin which we commit, we may live to repent of, but

self-murder canna sae mikle as be prayed for. A weel then, we'll suppose aw blawing out o' brains, and aw snecking o' craigs intirely set out o' the question; — the next thing to be considered is, what are ye to do wie your leeving sel? Now I canna but opine, that ye hae done the lassy sae mikle ill, that every other consideration maun hold but a secondary place, when compared wi' her peace and character. It's very true that in this country ye canna marry, — the mairs the pity for your ain sakes; but this is no the only country under the sun. Suppose ye were just to get upon half-pay, to take shipping for some foreign land, to make her your lawful wife, and to enter, as many other brave fellows do every day, into the service of some foreign power. I suppose you are no very particular as to the power that you serve."

"No, no, my good kind friend; not in the least," exclaimed Edward, his eyes sparkling with delight, as the Major continued his harangue: "If we can only manage to fly as you suggest, I will take service under any government, should it be that of the Algerines themselves, provided I can but carry Emily with me."

"Na, na, young man, no quite so fast as that. When I said ony government, I meant ony government under which a Christian man and an honourable soldier might serve. Now, as my notions on the score of church-government are no very nice, farther than that I wad aye be a protestant at heart, though for peace sake I might outwardly conform with the whore of Babylon herself, I am clear for your ganging wharever the best prospect may appear of speedy promotion. Hae ye ony friends or connections at ony o' the courts on the Continent?"

"Not one," replied Edward dejectedly. "I know not a soul who would so much as recommend me to the post of a common soldier."

"Weel, dinna let that distress you. There's a cousin o' mine, a lad frae the Isle o' Sky, a very good sort of a cheel, though he be a papist; — that man holds the rank of General in the Spanish armies. His name is M'Donald, and as soon as I can find out in what part of Spain he commands, Ise gee ye sik letters and recommendations to him, as cannot fail o' proving as gude to you as an heritable possession. Ye need na glowr, as if ye would thank me for this. Do ye suppose that Ranald M'Donald winna

be proud to serve ony friend o' mine, or ony other of my father's bairns?"

But in spite of this exhortation to the contrary, Edward overwhelmed his kind comforter with thanks and blessings. "You have saved my life, Campbell: nay, you have done more; you have set before me the road to happiness; and to happiness not only for myself, but for one far dearer to me than self."

Edward now sprang from his bed, and began instantly to pack up such articles as he imagined he should most stand in need of by the way, and in a foreign country. But in the midst of these preparations, a thought struck him, and he stopped short. "Great God!" cried he, "what am I about to do? Is she not my niece? Will not our whole intercourse be such as neither God nor man can approve? Campbell, I must not marry her. I will fly with her to Spain, but we shall live together as brother and sister."

"If ye dinna marry her, Ned," was the laconic reply, "ye's get nae help frae me."

"Why not?" demanded Edward. "Can we not live together on the terms I propose; and will you refuse your assistance because I

resolve to violate no more the commands of Heaven?"

"It's no because you mak that wise and godly resolution that I refuse you my assistance; but because you made ane just afore't which I ken right weel ye canna keep; and which if ye try to keep it, canna fail to bring lasting infamy both on yourself and me. Godsake, man, the Inquisition will get had o' you when they find your sister clecking six months after you are settled in Spain."

In spite of his griefs, Edward could not help smiling at the very plain and explicit manner in which the good Major expressed himself: but he added, "You surely would not have me marry my niece?"

"I certainly wodna recommend to ony young man to follow your example; but, situated as you are, I think ye canna weel help it. Nae doubt it were mikle better that the lassie were na just sae near of kin to you; but in the Highlands we think na muckle o' these matters; particularly whan the relationship is only by the mither's side, as is the case between you. Besides, though I wad be the last man on earth to speak lightly o' sik things, dinna we see

cheelds rinning awa with their neighbour's wives every day, and marrying them the neisht; and isna that a much greater sin in the sight o' God, think ye? Nane o' your romantic and Platonic loves wi' me, Neddy; ye mauń just promise to marry the bit lassy as soon as ye set your fit on foreign ground, or the deil a step will I stir in your business."

In all probability Edward was not, from the first, very slavishly wedded to his own romantic proposal; though he at least salved his conscience by making it. He submitted, therefore, as was most fitting, his own serious judgment to the graver reasoning and sounder experience of Major Campbell, and finally consented to make Emily his wife, as soon as proper arrangements could be made for the performance of the marriage ceremony in a foreign country.

These matters being settled, the next thing to be done was to fix upon a proper time for commencing their operations. Edward was clear that the Major and himself should set out instantly for Preston; that they should provide a post-chaise and four, two hours after their arrival there, and, spiriting Emily into it, that all three should drive direct for Dover.

But the Major's cooler head perceived numberless flaws in this arrangement. In the first place, their sudden arrival at Dr. Stanley's house could not fail to inflame to the utmost those suspicions, which Emily's letter hinted, in pretty explicit terms, had already taken possession of the minds of the whole family. These suspicions once roused, however, would not be easily laid again; and thus there was very little chance that an opportunity of conveying the lady to the carriage would occur at all, or if it did, her absence would be immediately observed, and the fugitives pursued and overtaken. The scheme, therefore, which Major Campbell suggested was this, that, in the first place, an hint should be given to Emily of what was in agitation, in order that she might feign some excuse for shifting her bed, and occupying a room by herself; and that she might not be taken wholly by surprise, when their plan was ripe for execution. Now this he undertook to manage by means of his own servant; a fellow whose mother had been his nurse, and who, with all the natural cunning and sagacity peculiar to a low Highlander, was in no respect deficient in the attachment to his chief, and foster-brother,

for which the hardy mountaineers and islanders are remarkable. As soon as intelligence should reach them that Emily was aware of their design, and prepared to aid them, the next thing to be done, was to journey to some sea-port town, lying out of the common beat of travellers to the Continent, and yet within a few hours' drive of Preston. If a vessel were about to sail from thence, to any port in Spain, they must immediately secure passages in her, and remaining in concealment till within a short time of her weighing anchor, they should then proceed towards the Rectory, and Edward stopping short at some ale-house or cabin within a mile's distance of the house, Campbell should go on, and contrive the time and place for the lovers meeting. To facilitate this latter part of the plan, again, and to hinder the family from wondering when broken in upon at an unseasonable hour by a stranger, Edward agreed to write a letter to his father, in which he pretended to have shot a man in a duel, and to be in hiding till he could find the means of escape to the Continent; and as such a letter could not safely be entrusted to the post, no surprise would be excited at its being personally

delivered by a friend. The agitation, likewise, into which it was guessed that the news would inevitably throw the whole family, must tend greatly to remove any obstacles of watchfulness, &c. which might otherwise present themselves in the way of the projected elopement; and the coast being thus cleared, Edward and his mistress would at least have a fair start, sufficient to destroy all probability of their being overtaken, provided they used proper diligence to effect their escape. Such was the plan which Major Campbell proposed for the future destiny of his young friend; a plan in which Edward could perceive no feeble part, and which promised to conduct him, not only to happiness with Emily, but to glory in the ranks of Spanish warfare.

CHAP. XVIII.

FURTHER PREPARATIONS.

THE two friends having ended their deliberations, separated, for the purpose of carrying each his projected task into execution. The part assigned to Edward, though apparently very little laborious, was, nevertheless, one which he would have given worlds to avoid acting; namely, the inditing of a wilful and deliberate falsehood, invented for the very purpose of deceiving his father, and in an eminent degree calculated to give him pain. The part assumed by the Major, again, was one of greater bustle and action. Honest Dougald was forthwith dispatched with a letter to Emily from her lover. This he was charged to deliver with his own hands, and so to manage matters that its delivery should be observed by no human being besides. Nor could a fitter agent have been selected to proceed upon such a business. Dougald was wary, honest, and close as the grave. He was ready to execute

all his master's commands without once stopping to enquire into their legality; for there is no sin, not even murder itself, so heinous in the eyes of a Highlander, as a breach of faith towards his natural leader or chief.

But it was not alone on account of his fidelity, that Dougald possessed qualifications which, in a peculiar manner, fitted him for his present employment. Dougald was well acquainted with that part of the country in which Mr. Gordon, Emily's father, had taken up his abode. He had even seen Mr. and Mrs. Gordon themselves, and hence the task of pretending that he had come up from Inverness-shire with a drove of black cattle, and just called in to see how the young lady was, that he might carry back word to the laird, at his return, was to him one of the most perfect ease, and even safety.

Away went Dougald, therefore, upon his mission, in full confidence of arranging matters to his master's satisfaction; whilst his master himself was in the mean time busied in making other arrangements, necessary to Edward's comfort. After the labour of a whole day, he contrived to pen an epistle, addressed to " His

Excellence Sir Colan Cambel, Barnat, at the Il of Skee, into his owne handes, theas." As the Major's letter was rather a curiosity of its kind, the reader may perhaps be pleased with the perusal of a true copy, given to young Stanley by his Scottish friend, and found amongst the papers of the former after his demise. It ran thus:

"Much respecket and dear father,

"This cums to informe you that I am muckel aboot my ordinar, in good health and spirits, praised be God. I hope that you and Elspith, and Rory, and Duncan, and Colin, &c. &c. (here follows a list of nineteen male and female names, being those of the Baronet's children. Of this number two only were legitimate; but they all lived together in the most perfect harmony,) are weel also.

"It's a long while sinsyne I hae gotten ony word o' our right trusty and honorble cussin Ranald Macdonald, and am inkling that mayhap ye may hae heard o' him or frae him yoursel. Now, suld the case be sae, I wad thank ye to send me his dirrecshon, because a friend o' mine that's thinking o' crossing the watter, wad carry a bit not frae me, and bring back one frae

him. Be sure to write as soon as this comes to hand, to

"Your loving and dutiful sun,

"DONALD CAMBEL."

The above letter being carefully sealed, and handed over to the care of the post, the Major next proceeded to secure a year's leave of absence for Edward, under pretence of his desiring to travel for the improvement of his education. As the present was a period of profound peace, his application was not refused, and furthermore a train was laid for the removal of Stanley upon half-pay; an exchange for which Campbell, with all the prudence generally attributed to his countrymen, took care that the other contracting party should pay a good douceur, as Edward afterwards found by referring to his agent's accounts. Thus every thing which could be done towards settling the affairs of the fugitive, was effected, and the two friends now only waited the re-appearance of Dougald to carry the main part of their plan into execution. As to the epistle to Sir Colin, as it must take at least three weeks of reaching its destination, it would be madness to wait the return of an

answer, which could not be expected much sooner than six weeks or two months hence. It was accordingly resolved, that to whatever town in Spain the vessel in which Edward took his passage was bound, there or thereabouts he should remain till he heard from his friend the Major, who would not only forward letters of introduction to General Macdonald, but would also act as Edward's agent in the remittance of his pay, or any other sums of money which might be due to him from any other quarter.

The town where Edward's regiment was quartered being distant from Preston no farther than a journey of four and twenty hours, only three days elapsed without any tidings being received from Dougald. At the end of that period he made his appearance in person, having fully executed the commission which had been entrusted to him; and brought with him an answer to the letter in charge of which he had set out. No difficulty, it appeared, had presented itself in the way of his obtaining an interview with the young lady. At first, indeed, he had almost got himself into a scrape by enlarging to Dr. Stanley's servants upon the "bonny blue een, and linty tap of his young mistress."

for Dougald took it upon him to personate, not only a native of the lands of Glenfiddy, but the confidential herdsman of the laird himself. But partly through the unintelligibility of his dialect, and partly through the stupid ignorance of those to whom he addressed himself, who rather wondered at the change of colour in Miss Emily's eyes and hair, than doubted the affectionate peroration of Dougald, the latter contrived to escape detection, though, to use his own words, "he ne'er got sik a fright in aw his days, as when he was brought before a leddy wi' locks like the craw, and een like ony slaes with blackness.'

Emily's letter contained but three lines, and these evidently written in extreme agitation. It spoke of the terror and anxiety of the writer, it hinted at the probable consequence of their flight upon Dr. and Mrs. Stanley; — but it ended by assuring Edward that she would punctually attend to his directions, and would follow him in weal or woe over the world.

So far all things went on well; and now there remained only the packing of trunks, and the selection of apparel to be gone through. In the latter Edward was particularly careful. He put up just sufficient to make him comfortable

by the way, and for some time after his arrival in a foreign country, without encumbering himself with such a quantity as might impede his progress, or distract his attention. Among other necessaries a case of excellent pistols, and a well-tempered sabre were not forgotten; for it was by means of these that he was now to make his way in the world. At the suggestion of the Major he likewise provided himself with a fowling-piece.

"Ther's plenty o' game I oonderstand," observed Campbell, "in the mountains o' Spain. I dinna ken whether ye'll find any black cock or muir-hens; but o' hares and patricks my coosin sent us word that there is fecks. And ye ken shooting is a braw sport for a soldier."

Every preparation being now made, the friends were already on their way to the coach-office, when Campbell slily enquired of his companion, whether or not he had provided himself with money. Edward looked perfectly aghast when the question was put. Except a couple of gold, and some half-dozen silver pieces, his purse contained absolutely nothing; and it had never once occurred to him, that without a greater supply than this all other preparations

must be abortive. But the Major only smiled at the tone and look of horror with which he declared that he had totally over-looked this necessary precaution.

"I was just thinking sae," observed the veteran. "You hairum scarum English chields think nae mair aboot siller nor ye do aboot the dirt under your feet; and yet what the deevel can we do without it? It's siller, man, that gars the pleugh move, and the ship sail, and the battle rage; its siller that does a' thing in this laigh warld o' ours; and though we may talk slightingly o' filthy pelf, as your poor deevils ca 'it that hae nane o't themsels, as lang as we are so situated as no to stand in need o't, my certie, we canna steer three steps frae our ain door cheek, without finding that we canna do without it. Now, were na ye a daft like chap, to think of running awa' to Spain, and carrying a bonny lassie wi' ye, and naething in your pouch binna twa goold pieces, and sax siller anes?—Twa goold pieces, and sax siller anes!" repeated he, laughing heartily at the idea of starting in life with such a portion; "and upon this grand sum ye was to leeve in a strange place, may-be for three months, till you suld

hear frae me. How many servants and horses did you propose to keep na?"

Edward, though a good deal vexed and irritated at what he considered the ill-timed raillery of his friend, could not help joining in the obstreperous cachinnation which the last idea extorted from the Major. They stopped for some minutes quite unable to proceed, or to do any thing except laugh; till the Major, wiping away with the back of his huge brown hand the tears which chased each other down his cheeks, at length observed,

"God's-sake man, dinna gar a body laugh sae; or I'll be as wake as water. But we'll no lat ye begin house-keepin on sic a sma' sum as that, neither. See, here's a bag, no very bonny on the outside, I'se allow"—pulling at the same time a greasy leathern wallet from the capacious pocket of his breeches—"here's a bag, or purse, ca't just what ye like, and ye're vera heartily welcome baith to it and its contents. It's no just sae weel stockit as I could wish, but wi' economy, a hundred guineas may keep poverty awa' frae your door, till you can get mair. But mind ye maun be saving; ye manna be flinging about your goold and siller to ilka dirty loon

that does ye a bit kindness. Just mak a boo, and say, 'thank ye freend,' and that will sair your purpose as weel if ye had gi'en him half-a-crown. Mind you're going to begin life, as it were; and ye'll never get on ava, if ye dinna glowr at baith sides o' a skeeling."

Edward took the bag which was so generously offered, with numberless thanks; but insisted upon being considered as Campbell's debtor for the loan of its contents. "You can deduct this sum out of my pay, Campbell; or if you get as much for the exchange, you may put it in your own pocket at once."

"We'll speak mair aboot that another time; and at all events, whan ye're a rich Spanish Grandee, I'se come upon you for the amount. In the mean time let us make haste, for I see the coach is just ready to start."

CHAP. XIX.

A JOURNEY.

The point towards which the course of the two friends was directed, was a sea-port town of no great magnitude, distant from Preston about five and thirty miles. The sole companions of their journey were Dougald and Flora. The former was destined to act as postilion as soon as his services in that capacity should be required, and the latter was an encumbrance, with which the Major would have very readily dispensed. But Edward was obstinate in his determination of carrying her along with him, and would not be gainsayed. "Weel weel, friend, tak your ain way," observed Campbell. "But I suld hae thought that a breeding wife would hae been care enough for ony man in a strange land, without fashing his thumb aboot a bit spaniel bitch. But young heads are aye wilfu'."

It was near midnight when the vehicle in which they travelled arrived at Sea-side, consequently no enquiries could be made respecting

the shipping in the harbour before the morrow. The friends accordingly fixed themselves in a little inn, close upon the beach; where they were provided with a good substantial supper, and clean wholesome beds, at a wonderfully reasonable rate, according to the Major's calculations; and as soon as daylight appeared, which, as it was now the month of November, took place at no very uncouth hour in the morning, Edward and his trusty Scot were stirring, and busied in their enquiries along the pier. The result of these enquiries was, that the harbour contained but one vessel bound for Spain. This was a dirty little brig, possessing the most wretched accommodation for passengers, and the port to which she was bound was no other than the far-famed Fontarabia; an old town lying upon the mouth of the Bidasoa, and at the very extremity of the whole kingdom of Spain. Necessity, however, has no law. There was not a harbour along the whole coast from which the fugitives could so readily sail, without attracting notice, as that of Sea-side; and the Major being entirely ignorant in what part of the Spanish dominions General Macdonald might chance to have fixed himself, the inconvenience attending

a temporary sojourn at Fontarabia might prove much less than its distance from Madrid appeared to threaten. Besides, the little brig was to sail in three tides at the very latest, and the idea of quitting England immediately would have over-balanced, at that time, in the mind of Edward, much more serious drawbacks than the thought of landing upon the borders of France presented.

Without any delay, therefore, passages were secured for two persons; for Edward, who assumed the name of Gordon; and for Emily, who was to pass for his wife. Such sea-stores as could be purchased on the spur of the moment, were immediately laid in, and at ten o'clock the friends were ready to start in a post-chaise for Preston. This journey they performed at their leisure, taking care to arrive at a small hamlet about a mile and a half from the rectory soon after nightfall; and as Dougald was their driver, they alighted at a paltry ale-house, without running any other risk of discovery, than such as might arise from Edward's features being familiar to the landlady. To obviate this danger, however, as far as by artificial means it could be obviated, Edward had provided himself

with a wig of a different colour from his own hair; he wore a green patch over one eye, and had stuck over his upper lip a pair of false mustachios. By these means his appearance was so far disguised, that by a passing observer he could not very easily be recognised; and he took care, by keeping entirely confined to the little parlour into which they were shewn, to hinder his host or hostess from obtaining more than a momentary peep of his countenance.

The letter which Edward had already penned was now delivered to Major Campbell, and whilst Dougald looked to the horses, and had them fed and cared for as well as circumstances would permit, the Major set out on his journey to the rectory. It was a night of storm and tempest. The rain came down in torrents, and loud blasts of wind shook the casements of the old room, in which Edward was left alone, to indulge in his own painful reflections. He listened to the tread of his friend, as letting the door bang from his hand he walked quickly past the window, and when the sound of his footsteps was lost in the roaring of the blast, all hope seemed to depart from the listener's bosom.

Hitherto, not an instant had been allowed for calm or dispassionate deliberation, as to the nature and probable results of the step which he was about to take. He had jumped at the proposal of eloping with Emily, as soon as it was made to him; his attention had been continually occupied from that moment to the present, in forming plans, or making preparations for flight, and he had found neither leisure, nor indeed inclination to consider how far the plan was practicable, or how its accomplishment, supposing it to be accomplished, was likely to affect either the parties themselves, or their nearest relations. Of his own fate Edward was perfectly reckless. He felt quite assured, that happen what would, peace and contentment could visit his withered heart no more. But the thoughts of what might befall others now came upon him in the most frightful forms; and he almost wished that the whole enterprise might fail, and that the escape of himself and Emily from the land of their fathers might be prevented.

But this wish, if formed at all, continued not long to keep its place in his imagination. The image of Emily, disgraced, and cast oft by all

her connections; an object of horror to those who once loved her, and of scorn to those who once respected her; driven to despair, and rushing either to self-destruction, or — O heavens!— he dared not dwell upon the still more horrible alternative. No no; let come what will, he was resolved to unite his destiny with hers. His parents, though the first shock of a discovery might, and surely would deeply affect them, must recover from the blow in the course of time. They would either banish all thoughts of him from their minds, as one unworthy of their affections, or —and he dwelt with fond partiality on the idea, — or, they would come in time to forgive his offence, and would welcome back to their hearts and affections, one, who by his renown in arms and high rank shed lustre upon his name, and overwhelmed in its blaze all memory of the errors of his youth.

Such were the agitating reflections in which Edward passed the moments that intervened between the departure of Campbell and his return. But as that return was deferred for a longer time than he expected, his patience began to exhaust itself, and the most dreadful apprehensions entirely occupied his mind. He rose

from the great arm-chair into which he had thrown himself, and paced the room with an agitated step. He stole softly to the stable, to enquire of Dougald if the horses were fed, and all things prepared for flight. Then he put his head out at the front door, and strained his eyes to penetrate the gloom; but there was no form visible throughout it. He listened for the sound of advancing steps: — it struck upon his ear, and he watched its progress with breathless anxiety. But the traveller, be he who he might, came not towards the little inn, but turning down a lane to the left, the sound of his footsteps were soon heard no more.

Edward now re-entered his little parlour. The fire blazed brightly, and the flame of an old-fashioned lamp cast a cheerful light through the room. He took up a torn volume of old Scottish ballads, and opened it. How it came there, he neither knew nor thought of enquiring, but where the leaves parted his eyes involuntarily fell, and took in the three following stanzas: —

" Come down from your bower, then, bonny lady,
  Come into these arms o' mine;
And we will flee to a far distant land,
  Whar the sun does ever shine."

"The lady has come frae her bower sae high,
Her own true knight to meet;
And he has kissed her bonny red lips,
And oh, that kiss was sweet.

"And he has set her on his own good steed,
And awa' to the south they did flee;
But lang ere they crossed the Scottish border,
An ice-cald corpse was she."

Edward shut the book as soon as he had read these verses, and the chill of superstitious terror crept through his blood. How came such a passage to turn up to him? — how came such a book in a little paltry ale-house, where the most wretched ballads were much more likely to be expected? Surely it portended an evil conclusion to his rash design. He rose once more from his seat and looked out. The wind still howled, but the rain had in a great measure ceased. Large fleeces of dark clouds floated across the face of the full moon, which ever and anon sent out a bright watery ray, which had hardly shone when it was again eclipsed. He gazed at the sky with a mind absolutely childish with dread; he saw in its troubled appearances indices of an offended God, and his heart sank within him. At this instant a quick step was heard plashing through the pools which

the rain had left upon the road side; it advanced in the direction of the ale-house; presently a figure, wrapped up in a cloak, could be discovered; it hurried to the door, and in a few minutes more Major Campbell stood before him.

CHAP. XX.

A FLIGHT.

"All goes well," said the Major, in an audible whisper, in reply to the look with which Edward enquired into the result of his journey. "It has been a melancholy business, but your part of it is settled; you are to meet her at midnight, at the garden gate which leads into the church-yard."

"Did you deliver the letter to my father?" asked Edward, breathless with agitation.

"I did, I was obliged to do it; I strove as far as I was able to avoid it, but it would not do."

"And how did he bear it?"

"Why, bad enough, poor man, bad enough; but there is no use in dwelling upon that. Stanley, I never did a friendly action before which caused me so much pain; I thought I could have almost betrayed your secret, when I saw the good man so completely cast down."

"Did my mother or sister read the letter?"

"No; your father, as soon as he had perused

it, rose and left the room. His countenance had, however, revealed that the letter contained evil tidings; so your mother and sister, who knew that I had come from you, hurried after him. I seized that opportunity of stating to Emily, whom I could not mistake, how matters stood; and I learned from her that all her preparations were complete, and that she now only waited for you."

"Well, but you said my father was cast down. Did you see him again, then?"

"Yes, he sent for me to his own room, and asked a thousand questions respecting the circumstances of the duel. Your letter had proposed that he should publish an account of your death in the newspaper, as a probable means of facilitating your escape, and he instantly drew up a notice to that effect. This he intrusted to me, weeping all the while like a child, and he moreover put this purse of twenty pieces into my hand, to give to you, if I was acquainted with your place of concealment. I'll tell you what, young man, I have told more lies this night for your sake, than I ever told in the course of my past, or hope to tell in the course

of my future life. But come, cheer up, and let us lay in some provision against the journey."

This last advice Edward could by no means follow. It was now ten o'clock, and in two hours a step would be taken, the consequences of which must at all events be temporary misery to his parents and sister; whilst its more remote effects, both upon them and himself, were buried in the mists of obscurity. But he had gone too far to recede; and besides, in two short hours, Emily would be his own. Oh, how tardily these hours rolled on! He looked at his watch about twenty times during each of them, and at length, when its hands pointed exactly to half-past eleven, he set out towards the place of meeting. In the meanwhile, Dougald was ordered to have the carriage in readiness, with the horses' heads turned towards Sea-side; and the Major, having seen the bill discharged, and other arrangements complete, took his station half way between the rectory and the hamlet.

Edward walked forward with the step of a man who is about to perpetrate a deed, which he desires to accomplish, though perfectly aware all the while, that its accomplishment

will bring ruin upon himself, and all who are dear to him. Not a sign or sound of wakefulness prevailed throughout the little town of Preston, as he hurried along its streets. He took a lane which led down to the churchyard, some space to the left of the rectory, and passing through the gate which opens upon a gravel path conducting to the south door, he turned short round, and was quickly at his post. He had reached the wicket through which he and his relations had so often issued, when in the days of his youth they went in a body "into the temple, with the voice of joy and gladness, among such as kept holiday." Just then the old church tower told a quarter from twelve, and a moon-beam darting at the instant through a crevice in the clouds, fell upon a marble monument, near which he was standing. The light was so strong, that he could with ease decipher the inscription. It was simply this: "Sacred to the memory of Sarah Franklin, who was removed from this world to a better, on the twelfth of July, 17—, aged nineteen." O God! what were then his thoughts?—They cannot be painted, they were such as even he who felt them could have no language to de-

scribe. — How then can they be delineated by another?

The wind, which had hitherto been boisterous, and which sounded fearfully as it swept over the withered hemlocks, and roared in the branches of the aged yews, now began to moderate; and the clouds which its violence had continually dispersed, began once more to collect in one huge black mass over the whole face of the sky. Large drops of rain splashed against the surfaces of the tombstones, mixed occasionally with particles of hail, which struck so forcibly upon his hat, as almost to startle him. In the midst of this commencing shower, the bell of the steeple told twelve; and the sound went to his heart, as it was echoed back, toll after toll, by the neighbouring wood, and died away in melancholy solemnity, over the slumbering village. The sound had scarcely ceased, when Edward could distinctly hear the sash of a window thrown cautiously up. He thought, also, that he distinguished a female form leaning upon the ledge, and, as it were, listening whether she could catch any noise of a living creature near. "Hist!" cried Edward in a low whisper. There was still a little waving of the old yew-trees, so

the signal could not be heard. "Hist!" cried he again, somewhat more loudly; the ejaculation was instantly answered, and the window being closed as gently as it had been lifted, for a few moments all was still.

During this dreadful pause, Edward's heart beat so violently, as almost to produce suffocation. Its sound was like that of a large time-keeper on board of ship, equally loud, and equally rapid. But his attention was speedily attracted by the noise of bolts cautiously undrawn, and a key turning softly in its socket. Presently he could distinguish the lifting of a latch; then came another dead silence of a moment; next a light but quick step was heard upon the gravel walk, and in two seconds after Emily was in his arms. She carried in her hand a small trunk, filled with such wearing apparel as she found it practicable to remove, and all the little jèwels and trinkets of which she was possessed; but such was the agitation of her nerves, that she had scarcely experienced the warm embrace of her lover, when it fell upon the ground, and produced considerable noise. At the same instant a gust of wind took the wicket-gate, which in her haste she had left

open, and slammed it too with a sound which rang through the whole church-yard. "Oh Emily!" exclaimed Edward, in a whisper, "command yourself, I beseech you, or we are for ever lost. Now is the time to fly. A carriage waits hard by, to convey us to a place of safety. Give me your trunk, and support yourself upon my arm."

But Emily was too much agitated to move. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could preserve her from fainting; and she clung round his neck, with a grasp so vigorous, that he found it quite impossible either to alter his own position, or to shake it off. Just then a window was thrown hastily open in the rectory. Terrified beyond measure, the guilty pair stooped down behind the wall which separated the garden from the church-yard, and having waited till they heard the sash again let down, and the shutter closed, they lifted the fallen trunk, and hurried through among the tombs. The darkness was, however, so great, that though they were both intimately acquainted with every foot of ground on which they trode, it was not without considerable trouble, and various stumbles over the elevated graves, that they

contrived at length to reach the gate by which Edward had entered. This being attained, the rest of their progress was easy. They passed along the town with the speed of lightning, unnoticed by any of its slumbering inhabitants, and being met at the place appointed by Major Campbell, they were instantly handed into the carriage.

"Don't you go with us, Campbell?" asked Edward, as the Major closed the door upon him and Emily.

"No," replied Campbell; "I must wait and see how the thing is taken; and I must set the pursuers, if they follow, on a wrong scent. Farewell, and God bless you!"

"God bless you, thou best of friends!"

Dougald was already mounted, he cracked his whip, and the horses set off under its influence, at a full gallop.

CHAP. XXI.

EMIGRATION.

THE journey from Preston to Sea-side was performed by Edward and Emily in profound silence. She lay, during the whole time, upon his bosom, in a state of feeling which defied all utterance; whilst his thoughts ran wild so completely, that he had neither the power nor inclination to speak a word. Dougald, however, seemed in no respect to be put out of his usual routine. He plied his whip ever and anon, as its application appeared to be wanting; and in little more than five hours brought them in perfect safety to the pier. There they found that their sea-store, and every part of Edward's baggage were already embarked. Nothing therefore remained to be done, except to take possession of the cabin allotted for them; and this being effected the vessel soon began to lift her anchor, and in a very short time the shores of England were fast receding from their view.

It was now, when the listless sameness of a sea-voyage gave an opportunity for their thoughts more freely to exercise themselves, that Edward and Emily began to contemplate, with something like dismay, the rash step which they had taken. Into the events of futurity they hardly dared to pry: all before them was dark, vague, and unsatisfactory; the only certainty, indeed, upon which they could reckon, being the acquirement of names, which no honourable or virtuous person would ever mention without horror. Of the fate of their relatives, too, they trembled to think. Edward knew full well, that upon him all the hopes of the most affectionate parents rested, for comfort and support in their declining years; and he could not contemplate without trembling, the probable effect of his discovered worthlessness upon them. As to Emily, she thought not only of her friends at the rectory, but of the green vales and heathy mountains of Invernesshire; of the kind hearts which she had left there, and which were so soon to be pierced through, by the announcement of her shameful flight; till the unbidden tears rose thick and fast to her eyes, and chased each other so rapidly down her cheeks,

as to leave behind them traces like the channel of some winter torrent, which the heat of summer has dried up. But it was chiefly when by any chance they were parted from each other, that these distressing thoughts overpowered them. Their love for each other was still as wild and warm as ever. Had it been put in their power to undo any part of their past conduct, there is little likelihood that they would have availed themselves of that power; and therefore they no sooner met again, or caught the glance of each other's speaking eyes, than all ideas were forgotten beyond the delight of knowing that they were inseparably united.

The voyage was, on the whole, as favourable, and as little productive of events, as a voyage from England to the Spanish coast, in the month of November, could be expected to be. The weather was, of course, variable; sometimes fine, and sometimes the contrary; but no accident befell either them or the ship; and they crossed the Bay of Biscay with as trifling an attack of sea-sickness as any persons unaccustomed to the motion of a vessel in that stormy gulf, may fairly hope to experience. At length the bold outline of the Pyrenean mountains

began to be discernible from the deck, and as they gradually neared the land, presented a spectacle upon which the eyes of the lovers were not likely soon to weary in resting. Hill upon hill they rose in all the hoary grandeur of winter; their summits were covered with eternal snow, and hanging masses of ice leant over the faces of various precipices, serving as the fountains to numberless foaming cataracts, which dashed themselves from the rocks, and poured down into the valleys.

At the base of these mountains, where they end somewhat abruptly, towards the sea, stands the town of Irun; and about two miles to the north of it is built that of Fontarabia. This latter was once a place of considerable note. It is begirt with strong walls, which on one occasion were blown up in haste by a French garrison, when it was compelled to evacuate the place; and the ramparts having never been repaired, the town, even now, presents the aspect of a place in ruins, or a city which has lately been visited with the calamities of war. The trade of Fontarabia was probably never great; in latter times it has much fallen away, and now when Edward and Emily entered the Bidassoa,

at the mouth of which the city stands, they found there only one or two small brigs, and a few barks which resembled fishing-vessels much more than even coasting traders.

Their ship having been moored to a sort of pier, or rather a wooden weir, which runs out into the river, the captain, who was a Spaniard, and had been remarkably attentive to his passengers during the whole of the voyage, kindly agreed to conduct them to the best casada in in the place, and to assist them in looking out for such lodgings as they informed him they should require to occupy for a space of time not probably exceeding three months. He likewise undertook to supply them with trust-worthy servants, and was, in short, as friendly towards them as the state of their circumstances would allow.

Hast thou ever beheld the interior of a Spanish casada, or inn, good reader? If not, it were vain for me to attempt giving thee an idea of its total want of all comfort. The only room in the house in which a fire can be lighted, is the lumbre, or kitchen; a large ill-furnished sort of hall, with a chimney sufficiently capacious to permit the assembling of twenty people round

the dogs, on which billets of burning wood are laid for the combined purpose of cooking provisions and warming the guests. This cozy spot is, for the most part, taken full possession of by muleteers, carriers, and other travellers of that description; so that if the feelings of the wanderer be too nice to put up with the strong garlic flavour, and coarse manners of these recumbents, he must suffer the punishment due to over-refinement, by shivering in a bedchamber by himself. But the furniture placed in these latter apartments is still less to the mind of an Englishman than that of the lumbre; filthy blankets are heaped upon a mattress, such as I abstain from describing; broken chairs, or stools, are disposed at intervals round the walls. But for thy life beware how thou liftest any part of the drapery, either of thy dressing-table, or thy bed, otherwise thy garments will be peopled in an instant with active colonists whom thou wilt find it no easy business ever after to dislodge.

Such at least was the sort of house of call into which Edward and Emily were ushered; and to say the truth, it was the best in Fontarabia. But their situation was not such as to

keep alive, far less to create an excessive fastidiousness. They could not, indeed, submit to associate with the company in the kitchen; a chamber was therefore allotted to them up stairs; and as the captain represented his friend to be a rich English lord, who knew not how to spend his money sufficiently fast, a pan of charcoal was laid for their use in the middle of the floor, and such viands as the house could furnish were presently brought before them.

The effect of a change in the manners and appearance of the people, so complete as that which cannot help striking all persons who embark at an English port, and disembark in a Spanish one, was, on the present occasion, very favourable to the spirits of the wanderers. Every thing was new, and therefore interesting; the filth, andother inconveniences of their abode, were not indeed quite so agreeable; but Edward and Emily had set out with the determination of disregarding all mere bodily annoyances, and they did not therefore permit those with which they were now beset to add to the weight of the much greater cares against which they were doomed to struggle. Nay, it may even be questioned whether these said annoyances were

not, on the whole, of use to them, by placing slighter grievances immediately before their eyes, and compelling them, at least for the time, to forget the greater.

But the trifling inconveniences of a Spanish hostelry they were not destined long to endure. By aid of their friendly captain, a neat cottage in the outskirts of the town was hired for the space of three months. It was furnished in a plain, but not inelegant style, surrounded by a pretty garden, and commanded a glorious prospect of the mountains on one hand, and of the sea on the other. Its walls were covered with vine-branches; its grass-plot adorned with myrtle and other odoriferous shrubs. In short, it was exactly such a residence as both Edward and Emily would have chosen, had they been free to select an abode in which to pass the season of promised comfort and domestic quiet. Two servants were soon procured, a male and female; and in the short space of two days from the hour of their landing in Spain, the lovers found themselves settled in a snug unassuming cabin of their own, with every possible comfort around them, and a sum of one hundred guineas still undiminished in their exchequer.

CHAP. XXII.

DOMESTIC SCENES.

For the first six weeks of their abode in their new residence, Edward and Emily may be said to have tasted of, at least, comparative happiness. It is true, that fearful surmises as to the condition of those whom they had left behind obtruded themselves but too frequently upon their waking thoughts; and that of their dreams, by far the greater proportion presented only objects of terror, and pictures of misery. But the dreams departed with the return of daylight, and uneasy waking thoughts were dismissed as soon as possible; so that, on the whole, the time passed cheerfully away, for they were perfectly contented with each other. As the spring advanced, which in the milder climate of Spain begins to take place at a much earlier period than in England, Edward devoted much of his time to the cultivation of his garden; whilst Emily would sit beside him working with her needle, and preparing

dresses for the unfortunate fruit of their illicit love, which promised, before long, to make new demands upon their care. On other occasions Edward would take his gun, and walking forth among the mountains, attended by his faithful Flora, seldom failed of returning with a game-bag well stored with spoil; by which means his mind was at once occupied and amused, and their larder kept tolerably well supplied at a moderate expence.

As time rolled on, however, Edward could not deny to himself, that his mind became every day less and less easy. Seven, eight, ten, and now twelve weeks were gone, and yet no tidings had reached him from Major Campbell; whose silence alarmed him, not only because it bid fair to wither the bright prospects with which he had set out on his migration, but because its continuance, if it should continue much longer, could not fail of subjecting him to very serious pecuniary inconvenience. Edward had never been an economist, he had never known what it was actually to stand in need of money, and hence he knew not its value; the consequence of which was, that he threw away small sums with the greatest indifference, without once reflecting,

that now his whole visible fortune was in his hands. Already a deep inroad was made upon the sum with which the lovers had begun housekeeping; there were not, in fact, more than twenty guineas remaining; and should they receive no supply previous to the disbursement of these, their means of actual subsistence would become exceedingly precarious.

Alarmed at this state of things, Edward sat down and penned a letter to the Major, in which he intreated him to keep back no longer his promised credentials, and likewise to recruit his exhausted finances with as little delay as possible. The writing of this letter had at least the effect of so far composing his mind, that he waited with tolerable patience till the expiration of the time at which an answer might reasonably be expected; but that time arrived, passed on, was doubled and doubled again, and yet no answer reached him. Another and another letter followed the first with like bad success, till at length Edward began to believe himself betrayed, and to curse, as a villain and a traitor, the very man whom he had accustomed himself to regard as the paragon of honour and of friendship.

The twenty pieces which, when he first began his series of letters, still adhered to the interior of Edward's purse, were now diminished to five. He had never breathed to Emily a syllable concerning the state of his finances; he dared not reveal to her the truth, and he could not prevail upon himself deliberately to deceive her; so that the change in his manner, which now became too great to escape notice, cut her to the soul, and caused her to shed many a bitter tear in secret. She knew not that her Edward was tottering on the very brink of ruin; it would have been even a relief to her to be assured, that his moodiness sprang from the dread of poverty which he possessed not the means to avert. In her idea, every distracted look, every fit of silence, far more every word uttered in a tone of harshness and impatience, sprang from regret at the rash step which he had taken, and gave a death blow to all her hopes of peace and contentment upon earth.

Emily was by nature a girl of proud spirit and independent feeling. She loved to madness, because she believed herself beloved in turn, and there was no sacrifice which she was not ready to make, in order to prove the depth and sin-

cerity of her passion. But the thought of Edward's growing coldness stung her to the quick. Was she, then, who had given up all which woman holds dear; who had sacrificed, not only her family and kindred, but her honour and reputation to her love; was she to be regarded with indifference by the very man for whose sake she had willingly forfeited her claim even to self-respect? Was she to be looked upon as a child's plaything, pleasing whilst it is new, but fit only to be tossed aside as soon as it has grown familiar? — this was a pitch of degradation to which she would not stoop. She was not the woman to whine and weep for the love which she had once possessed; she scorned to solicit as a favour the thing which she ought to hold as her right. — No, if he was grown thus ungrateful and ungenerous, his vanity, at least, should not be flattered by witnessing her anguish. — In private her tears might flow till their fountain was dried up; but in his sight she was determined that no symptom of grief, no sound or look of sorrow, should ever betray the real state of her heart.

Such were her proud resolutions; but between forming a resolution and carrying it into

practice there is the widest possible difference. Though she carefully suppressed all reproachful thoughts, giving them no utterance in words, and, as far as she was able, hindering their appearing, even in her looks, it was quite impossible for her to free her manner from just so much of restraint as drew the attention of Edward, and caused him to observe that all was not as it ought to be. Edward was not conscious that his own manner had undergone a change to the full as startling as that of Emily; for who is aware of the involuntary changes in his own deportment. He could not, therefore, help wondering at the visible alienation of Emily's affections, and he formed a thousand silly and improbable conjectures in order to account for it. But none of these were sufficient to satisfy even himself; so he at length ceased to make them, and summed up all by concluding that Emily was grown tired of seclusion, and that she would give worlds to be again placed in the rectory of Preston, with her hopes as bright, and her reputation as unsullied as when first he met her.

As soon as he had formed to himself this conclusion, Edward's indignation became so

much roused at the bare idea of its truth, that for a whole day he hardly exchanged two words with the partner of his guilt. She again regarded herself as the party injured, and him as the traitor. She would not, therefore, condescend to conciliate, or solicit an explanation of his behaviour; but met coldness with coldness, and estrangement with estrangement. This was the first positively miserable day which Edward and Emily had passed; but both were too proud to confess the anguish of their internal feelings.

Edward had risen from a sleepless bed, without having exchanged a single word with Emily during the entire night; he was preparing to set out for the mountains with his gun, having swallowed his morning's meal in moody silence; when the landlord, to whom a quarter's rent had been due for some time, stepped into the cottage, and requested, with great respect, that the gentleman would condescend to settle his account. The demand was so trifling, that he should not have troubled him by making it, only he had a sum of money to look up that day; and he would therefore feel particularly obliged by the receipt of two doubloons, being the amount of one quarter's rent, up to the end

of February. I need not inform my reader, that two doubloons are equivalent to something more than three guineas; whereas the whole of Edward's stock amounted only to five. He pulled out the whole of this sum, however, and throwing it to the Spaniard, desired him to pay himself. The man lifted the gold, and having pocketed four of the guineas, returned to Edward the fifth, telling him, at the same time, that he had no change, and that he would credit his next quarter's account with the difference; Edward only nodded assent, and the Spaniard withdrew.

As soon as the stranger's back was turned, Edward, who had been standing with his gun in his hand, cast it from him, and threw himself into a chair. He buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud.— The sound of his sorrow was what Emily could not endure. All his coldness and harshness she had borne;—her pride supported her under it, and would have continued so to do, had it lasted; but the contemplation of his grief melted her proud heart at once, and running towards him, she wound her arms about his neck and wept bitterly. In an instant she was folded to his bosom.

"Oh Emily!" cried he "I can bear any thing, every evil which man or devil can bring upon me, but not the loss of your affections. Love me, Emily, love me as you were wont to do; for in truth I stand in need of all your love to support me."

"Love you, Edward! Oh! do you doubt my love?—What have I done to make you doubt it?—What have I not done to convince you of its reality and its depth? But it is you, Edward, who are changed. It is you who no longer love your poor, lost, degraded Emily; and why should I wonder at this? I am indeed unworthy of your love. I deserve to be hated and despised by all the world; but oh do not you hate and despise me!"

"I, Emily! I hate and despise you! Heaven is my witness, that I have never ceased to doat upon you; that even when I thought you most cold and most estranged, I would have given the world to press you to my heart, as I do now; but pride would not suffer me. Why then do you say that I am changed?"

"And are you not, Edward? Have you not met me with indifference these many weeks past? Have you not sat beside me, and brooded

in silence over something for hours together; and when I broke in upon your contemplations, by asking a question, have you not answered it as if you wished that I were dead, or that you had never seen me?—And yet you ask why I can imagine that you are changed."

"Emily, forgive the want of confidence in you which I have exhibited; and believe me that if I have kept my sorrows to myself, I did so only because I could not bear the idea of giving you pain. So help me God! my love for you is as warm, and has constantly been as warm, as when first I declared it. But oh! Emily,"—and here he held her from him with one hand, whilst with the other he pulled his own hair as if he had designed to pluck it out by the roots—"we are ruined! I have but a single guinea in my purse, and I know not how or where I am to look for more!"

The whole truth instantly flashed upon the mind of Emily. "And I thought that you were tired of me all the while; that you had repented of having saved me from infamy; nay, that you even meditated leaving me to my fate. O Edward! can you pardon the injustice I have done you? Fool that I was, not to know you

better, — not to know that my own Edward, for whose sake I have given up so much, was incapable of thus rewarding me for the sacrifices. As to poverty, what matters it, whilst we have each other's love to make life comfortable? We will go and work together in the fields, we will beg together, we will do any thing, and do it cheerfully, convinced, as we must now for ever be, that our hearts cannot be disunited."

Again Edward strained her to his bosom, and impressed a kiss of renewed affection upon her lips. At that hour all the anxiety attendant on anticipated poverty was forgotten. The love which for a while back had burned dull and gloomily between them, burst out once again into its former brightness. They thought of nothing beyond the blessed consciousness of renovated confidence, and that day, which had risen upon them under circumstances so little promising or enlivening, proved to be one of the most purely and tenderly delightful which they spent since they first landed in Spain.

CHAP. XXIII.

CHANGE OF QUARTERS.

THE happiness, however, which the lovers had that day tasted, was not of such a nature as to remain for any length of time unembittered. With the return of the morrow, thoughts of their absolute poverty would make their way into the minds of both; and they brought with them all those apprehensions which the anticipations of that greatest of all innocent calamities never fails to occasion. But to waste their time in idle complaining would have been the height of folly; some steps must be taken, and that quickly too, to avert utter ruin; and the chief subject of deliberation now was, of what nature these steps should be.

Edward had appointed no other agent to manage his affairs besides Major Campbell; he therefore knew not through what channel to apply for such arrears of pay which might be due to him; and had he even known a person likely to interest

himself in his favour, their fortune had sunk to so low an ebb, that it would be impossible to await, where they were, the return of an answer. The lovers accordingly determined to contract their expences; the servants were instantly discharged; several jewels and trinkets belonging to Emily were sold, to enable them to pay the wages due; and as the house which they occupied was both larger and better than two persons could require, they resolved to resign it, and to retire to some obscure lodgings in the town of Fontarabia. This part of their plan was likewise carried into immediate execution. The landlord was sent for, and the rent punctually paid, even to the expiration of the current quarter; and Edward, having discovered such apartments in the town as he thought they might still manage to inhabit, their little baggage was removed thither without delay.

The lodgings which they now occupied were of that description which are generally let to journeymen-mechanics or handicraftsmen. They consisted of two apartments, one for sleeping, the other for eating; but both so meanly furnished, that Edward could hardly bring himself to usher Emily into her new

abode. The furniture of the living-room consisted of a deal table, three stools, one half of a pair of tongs, a broken poker, and a few crockery-ware dishes and wooden trenchers; there were, besides, a frying-pan, one or two stewpans, and a kettle without a lid. In the sleeping-room there stood a truckle bedstead, totally deficient in curtains, and not altogether sound in the ticking; upon which were heaped a woollen mattress and bolster, a dirty blanket, and a tattered coverlet. Besides this, a broken table stood at one end of the apartment, and an old chair minus part of its back, at the other; which, together with a piece of a pocket-looking-glass and a brown stone bason and jug, made up absolutely the whole of the furniture. Of carpeting there was not a shred in either room; whilst the lane in which this miserable hovel stood, was so narrow and confined, that it was hardly possible to avoid suffocation, even when all the windows were thrown open.

Edward had in some measure prepared Emily for the change which she was about to undergo as to residence, but he had been unable to muster courage enough to give a true description of her future abode. She bore the shock

of beholding it, however, like a heroine. Not a muscle of her face underwent a contraction when Edward handed her into the rooms, and she only smiled at the embarrassment of his manner as he endeavoured to account for their extreme shabbiness.

"What is it to us, love," said she, "where we live, provided we be not divided in heart and affections? These rooms stand in need of some cleaning, it is true; but you shall soon see what an excellent housemaid you have got, and how much even a house like this is susceptible of improvement."

Emily was as good as her word. She immediately divested herself of all the garments suitable to her rank, and purchased, with part of what they fetched, two plain but neat suits, such as are worn by the lower orders of Spanish women. Nor did she suffer in the eyes of Edward by this change in her habiliments; he loved her the more for the readiness with which she resigned every thing of which women are usually fond; and he admired her in her neat red petticoat and brown bodice, as much as he had ever done in the gayer attire which she was wont to wear, when she moved, the

pride of a ball-room, and the envy of all the ladies in it. But she did not confine her sacrifices to a mere change of garb; she became, from the instant of crossing their new threshold, his handmaid and attendant. She swept, white-washed, and garnished the rooms; with her own white hands she scoured the floors, till the boards looked as bright and as clean as if they had but just been laid down; she dressed his meals, she made his bed; in a word, she performed for him every office of a menial, and was amply rewarded for her toil by a look or expression of affectionate gratitude. Humbled and fallen as they were, it can hardly be said that they were yet quite miserable, for they were happy in one another.

The time was now rapidly approaching when Emily's accouchement might be expected. Every day, too, their little stock of money, which the sale of her trinkets and clothes had produced, was becoming more and more diminished, till at length Edward was forced to part, first with his pistols, then with his sabre, and last of all with his fowling-piece. His watch had been disposed of long ago, for the purpose of enabling them to pay their rent, and now he was forced

to sell, first one part of his wardrobe, and then another, till only the suit which he wore was left remaining. What was now to be done?—they could not starve,—they had no longer a single article to dispose of which could be converted into money. Emily had humbled herself to perform the duties of a menial; he, too, must do the same, and go out to work.

On the morning on which Edward mustered courage enough to form this resolution, they had had nothing to eat; there was no bread in the house, nor provision of any kind; neither was there a single maravedi with which to purchase it. Edward accordingly set out with the full determination of earning something, and as the most likely place of finding employment, he turned his steps towards the quay. Here he found a number of porters loitering about in the expectation of employment, in landing the cargo of a vessel which was entering the river. Edward did not join the company, though he too loitered about; but when the ship came to her moorings, he had not courage to solicit work; so having waited till he saw all his companions busy, he turned slowly round, and retraced his steps towards the hovel.

He reached the bottom of the staircase before the thought occurred to him, that he was about to return to a house which contained no food; that Emily, an inmate of that house, was perishing with hunger. This recollection drove him almost to madness. He hastily withdrew the foot which he had already planted upon the lower step, and facing about once more in the direction of the quay, he proceeded with a quick step towards the spot which he had just quitted.

It chanced that at the corner of one of the most public streets he met a passenger who had just landed from the newly arrived vessel; and who uttered, as Edward was passing him, a sort of wish, that some lazy porter would come in the way to carry his trunk. Edward stopped short, and offered to be the bearer of the load. The man looked at him with amazement, for his dress was what is emphatically styled "shabby genteel;" and perceiving by his accent that he was a foreigner, took it for granted that the proposal just made proceeded from an excess of politeness. He therefore made a very low bow, and begged

that a gentleman of his appearance would not think of demeaning himself, by performing such an office for a stranger. It so happened that there was in the street this day a greater crowd of people than usually filled it. All eyes were instantly turned upon Edward. He was not proof against the feeling of false shame which again swelled in his bosom, so he returned the stranger's bow and passed on.

But he had hardly done so when his heart once more smote him; — "What have I to do with such feelings now?" thought he, "Emily stands in need of common food, and here am I, ashamed to do an honest action for the purpose of procuring it. I will go back and carry this man's trunk. It will break the neck of the business at once, to begin my manual labours in the sight of a multitude."

In pursuance of this determination, Edward hurried back to the spot where he had conversed with the stranger; but the opportunity of earning a trifle was lost. Another porter had presented himself immediately after Edward had passed; and he had only the mortification to behold the fellow walking down the street

before him, with the trunk upon his head. Edward's strength of mind had evaporated: he had succeeded in screwing up his courage to the sticking place once, but he could not do it again; so he returned home as he had gone out, hungry and pennyless.

CHAP. XXIV.

CHANGE OF TIMES.

EDWARD was met at the threshold of the door by Emily. " Well, love," cried she, smiling as she spoke, " what have you earned? Are we to have any dinner to-day or not?"

" I have earned nothing," was the reply.

" Nothing!" repeated Emily, as the hope which had given lustre to her now sunken eye, and colour to her faded cheek, died away — " Nothing! — then we must bear our hunger a little longer."

" Not if the sale of this coat can purchase us a loaf," cried Edward; and stripping himself of his upper garment he ran again into the street. In a few minutes after he returned, arrayed in a linen jacket, and bearing some provisions in his hand. These they eagerly devoured; and carefully setting aside for to-morrow's use the fragments that were left, they retired to bed at an early hour, with the design of drowning a returning appetite in sleep.

Next day Edward rose, more firmly determined than ever that no absurd feeling of

shame should hinder him from labouring. His dress was now so completely changed, by the substitution of a linen jacket in the room of his coat, that he found much less reluctance to-day in offering his services than he had done on the day preceding. Nor were his offers now met, as they had then been, with a wondering stare, or a low bow; they were readily accepted, and he had the satisfaction of bringing home to Emily, in the evening, a sum sufficient to supply all the wants of the day, and even in some degree to provide against those of the morrow.

It is impossible to describe the degree of hilarity which the consciousness of having mastered his prejudices, and discharged a painful duty, shed over the mind of Edward. His hovel had become infinitely more neat and comfortable since he went out in the morning. Emily looked so trim and so pretty in her peasant's garb, that he never in his life admired her so much as now. In short, all things partook of the colouring which a feeling of self-content cast over his own spirits, and even futurity itself was at least less black than it had been for many weeks before.

"We are sunk some degrees in our station

of life, Emily," observed he, as he kissed her cheek, and patted her shoulder; "but what matters it? — After all we have only arrived at that rank which our poets and novel writers so much commend. We belong now to the class of peasants among whom every domestic virtue is said to flourish most luxuriantly, and sure I am that we shall not, in that respect at least, bring discredit on our peers."

Edward pursued his new employment unintermittingly for the space of an entire week. He rose each morning with the cock, and having swallowed a simple, but not unwholesome meal, went forth to his labours; and returned to his lodging again, generally soon after sunset, with the proceeds of his industry. Then cleansing his hands and brow from the sweat and dust of toil, he either strolled out with Emily by the river's bank, or sat with her upon a broken part of the town-wall, watching the shades of night as they gradually came in upon the twilight and enveloped it in gloom. And in truth the period of the day which was now granted to them for enjoying the blessing of each other's society, suited well with the pensive disposition which seemed, of late, to have supplanted her

original gaiety and animation in the bosom of Emily. Her smile was still as beautiful as ever, but it had something sad and melancholy in it. Her cheek had lost its bloom, and her eye its fire. Her hands, in spite of the rude offices which they were now compelled to execute, had become more deadly white than they were wont to be; the fingers were long and thin, and her arms resembled more the arms of a waxen image than those of a living woman.

It has been observed that the hour of Emily's confinement was rapidly approaching. She was now, indeed, in daily expectation of that event, to which all women look forward with apprehension, however they may be surrounded with comforts, and supported by science and skill. But to Emily the anticipation of an accouchement brought much more than its ordinary share of terror. She was, as it were, alone in a strange country, poor, friendless, and unknown; no female face was near to encourage and support her by the smiles which it bore. Of medical attendance she could expect nothing, save the very meanest description, because she had not wherewithal to pay for any other; and even Edward might be absent from her at the

dreadful moment. In all this there was abundant source of anxiety and dismay. But besides these reflections, other thoughts obtruded themselves upon her no less violently, and they were still more appalling. What would become of her in case her confinement should prove fatal? This was a question at which she trembled when she put it to herself; and which, nevertheless, continually rose to demand an answer. I have said that Emily was at no time a professed unbeliever. The effects of her father's scoffing had not proceeded so far, as to root out from her mind all traces of a belief in a future state; which adheres, I had almost asserted, instinctively to the mind of every civilized human being; and which women are invariably the last to relinquish. That belief, again, had been greatly strengthened by the course of her education during the two years in which she was an inmate of the rectory at Preston: and now that her days had fallen in the 'sere and yellow leaf;' now that she was become but too well acquainted with the real sorrows of life, and felt that she owed her acquaintance with these to her own crimes and follies, every sober and serious opinion began to gather double force,

and the pangs of remorse were in no slight proportion mingled with the anxiety necessarily produced as to the issue of what was before her.

Her thoughts being turned into this channel, it was quite impossible to hinder their producing a very visible change upon her conversation and outward deportment. To Edward she was still as devotedly attached as ever; had Heaven itself been offered as the price of abandoning him, there is but too much reason to fear that she would have rejected the offer; yet she knew that the life which she led with him was one of no ordinary degree of guilt, and that knowledge, without being sufficiently active to induce an abandonment of sin, was still sufficient to embitter all the moments of her waking existence.

One evening Edward returned from his labour at an earlier hour than usual; he had observed for some time back, the growing melancholy of Emily's disposition, and naturally attributing it to her situation, and to the fears inseparable from it, he made a point of quitting his work as soon as had earned barely enough for their support, and devoting as much of his time as

could possibly be spared, to enliven and support her drooping spirits. On the present occasion they walked forth towards the sea-side; and sitting down upon a ledge of rock, they gazed for some moments upon the wide expanse of waters. The sun was just setting, and the face of the sea was tinged with the golden hues of his departing glory; far off were seen the white sails of several ships, which seemed to remain stationary upon the tide; and nearer were two or three fishing-vessels, whose canvass flapped lazily upon their small masts, as the roll of the wave shook them from side to side with the slow undulation of an almost dead calm. At the foot of the rock upon which they sat the advancing tide heaved up its tiny billows, with an unceasing murmur, more delightful than perhaps any other of the sounds of inanimate nature; whilst the wild carol of the fisherman struck ever and anon upon the ear, as the slight air which stirred wafted it towards the shore.

The hour, the scene, the sounds, so soft and so melancholy, suited well with the pensive cast of the lovers' thoughts; for Edward, too, was infected by the tone of Emily's spirits, and felt,

he knew not why, a more than ordinary load of care upon his soul. For some time they sat in silence, giving free scope to the gloomy forebodings which flitted, like dark shadows upon the hill's side, across their imaginations, till at length Edward broke the spell by observing,—

"You are sad, dear Emily; you are more than usually sad to night. Why do you suffer anticipations of evil thus to overpower you? Cheer up, my love, let us hope that our prospects may yet brighten; and if we can find nothing else to rejoice in, let us look forward with delight to the new source of enjoyment which the discharge of parental duties will soon afford us."

"Oh, Edward!" replied Emily, "you have touched upon the very saddest of my meditations. We shall never know what it is to be parents, at least I shall not."

"Nay, nay, Emily; this is weak and childish. Why should you nourish apprehensions for which there can be no just ground, and which are, in truth, the most likely of all means to produce the fatal catastrophe to which you allude. Look around you, love, and see how other women escape the perils to which you are

now exposed. Look at the peasants of the very country which we inhabit; they regard child-bearing as nothing, as not a whit more alarming than the closing of the eyes in sleep."

"True, Edward; but other women are not the, guilty creatures that I am. God blesses and protects the virtuous wife, in whatever walk of life she may move. He delivers her from the dangers of child-birth, and restores her to her husband and her family; but think you he will deliver me? Oh, no! do not dream it. I shall never arise from the bed on which my baby is born."

"For Heaven's sake," cried Edward, pressing her to his bosom, as if he were afraid of even then losing her, "talk not thus strangely and wofully. God knows that we live only for each other; he knows that were the one removed from this world, the boon of life would not be worth acceptance by the other. And he is a Being of infinite goodness; he will not therefore kill the one, without killing the other also."

"Why so, Edward? Have we then been so obedient to his laws, as to merit such a display of his goodness? Are we an innocent and oppressed couple, lawfully joined together,

though shipwrecked upon the ocean of life? Nay; turn not away your head: I take heaven to witness that I do not repent one sacrifice which I have made for your sake; and that were the power of recalling what is past, and of avoiding all that we have done, placed within my reach, I should reject it. But what does this prove? Only that I have loved, and still love you, Edward, better than I love my God, better than I love my religion, or my own soul; but it makes us not the less guilty, or unworthy the protection of the Deity. Edward, now that I have begun to speak, you must bear with me whilst I go on. I know not whence it arises, but there hangs upon my mind an impression, too powerful to be the offspring of mere womanish terror, that my days are numbered. Now, what I wish to extort from you is, a solemn promise, that you will not sum up your score of guilt, by the commission of any rash deed that cannot be recalled. If I give birth to a living child, you will of course be to it all that you would have been had its mother survived. Nay, I beseech you to hear me," continued she, looking upon him with an eye all bright and

cloudless, and gently holding her hand before his mouth, to stifle the words to which he laboured to give utterance; "hear me to an end, and then speak what you will. I said that you would look well to the nurture and education of our child, if it lived; if not, as I almost hope may be the case, lay it in the grave beside its mother. And then, dearest Edward, depart from this land of misery. Return to your parents, who, I am sure, will forgive your past errors; be to them still the comfort and support of their declining years. And oh! if the worthless name of Emily should ever chance to be the subject of your discourse, do justice to the memory of her who bore it. Tell them, that she loved too wildly, — that that was her chief fault, — that she preferred the indulgence of her passion to all which this world or the next could give, — that she did indulge it to the full, and that she was miserable. Say that her heart was broken; that remorse preyed upon her vitals, and ruined her peace; and yet, that to the last moment she loved you, and that her latest breath was expended in calling down blessings upon your head, whatever might be

her own fate when she stood before the tribunal of her God. Edward, you will promise me all this, here upon this bare rock, and in the eye of that glorious luminary, which I, perhaps, may never again see retiring to his rest."

Edward was too much overcome by contending feelings to be able to utter one word in reply. He burst into tears, and leaning his forehead upon his hand, wept till the gush of feeling had in some degree subsided. Emily did not interrupt him; her own eyes were, however, dry; there was a brightness in them which had not shone there for some time back, and her cheek was tinged with a crimson flush, which gave evidence rather of the depth of her enthusiasm than of any symptoms of health improved. At length Edward could so far command his feelings as to speak. He again entreated Emily not thus to give way to idle fears; but seeing that she insisted upon his either granting or refusing her request, he readily pronounced the promise which she desired him to make. "Remember," said she, "that your promise is witnessed by Heaven; and now let us be going."

They rose from their seat as the last faint ray of twilight melted along the sea; and bending their steps homewards, the lapse of a few minutes brought them to the interior of their cabin.

CHAP. XXV.

A TRIAL.

THE lovers retired to rest at their usual hour, but the gloom and despondency which had oppressed them during the day did not leave them during the night. Their dreams brought before them nothing except pictures of the most horrible description. Emily dreamed of shrouds, and coffins, and newly made graves, with all the other images which are wont to present themselves to the imagination of a person, over whose mind the expectation of a speedy dissolution has gained an ascendency. Her slumbers were therefore broken and uneasy, — she started ever and anon, as if endeavouring to escape some danger, and her moans were so audible as to awaken Edward with the sound. He clasped her to his bosom, and dispelled the dreadful images which had caused the tears to pour from her sleeping eyes in such abundance, as to moisten the pillow upon which her cheek rested; and she smiled when she found herself

alive and safe in his arms. Nor had his visions been more cheerful than those of his companion in guilt; he fancied himself standing near the rectory-house in Preston; a long solemn procession issued from the door, of persons dressed in deep mourning. The bell of the church was tolling, and the grave where poor Sarah Franklin lay was opened. Then he beheld the swollen cheeks and dripping hair of that interesting girl, and his very blood ran cold as he listened to the sound of her voice, whilst she shrieked to him for help in the water. Just at this instant, Emily's moans smote upon his ear; and in the uncollectedness of thought which accompanies the state between sleeping and waking, he threw his arms around her, fancying all the while that he was endeavouring to save Sarah Franklin from drowning.

The early beams of the sun were darting their brightness into the apartment where the lovers lay, when they woke from their troubled sleep; Edward instantly sprang from his couch, to go forth once more to his labour. But Emily remarked that she would lie still a little longer, as she felt somewhat poorly; there was not, however, any immediate danger to be appre-

hended, because her time was not yet come; only she felt sick and uneasy from having spent a restless night, and she thought that an hour or two longer in bed would recover her. Edward would therefore return in about two hours, to breakfast, when all things would be in readiness for his reception.

As usual Edward directed his steps towards the quay, in search of employment. A brig had just come in from England, and her cargo was landing. Edward advanced as he was wont, and besought something to do; whereupon a person who looked like the mate of the vessel, immediately set him to work. But the jealousy of the Spanish porters had now risen to its height; they had endured the intrusion of this stranger upon their province till they could endure it no longer. Hitherto they had contented themselves with hooting and hissing the vile heretic, from the moment he came amongst them till he departed; and he had borne it all, if not with indifference, at least without making a display of his indignation. But to-day, they proceeded a step further; he was in the act of stooping to lift an huge case or package upon the wheel-barrow, by means of which it was to

be transported to the warehouse, when one of the Spaniards who had been most vociferous in his abuse, came softly behind him, and tripping up his heel threw him down. He fell with his face upon the edge of the barrow, and hurt himself so severely, that the blood flowed in torrents from his nose and mouth. But the pain of the bruise was scarcely perceived:— burning with rage he sprang upon his feet, and with one blow of his fist knocked his cowardly assailant backwards into the water.

With considerable difficulty the floundering Spaniard was dragged to shore by his comrades, and then the most violent uproar began. Edward scorned to fly, though perfectly aware that he would have to contend with overpowering numbers. He planted his back against a wall, and brandishing a huge beam of wood that chanced to lie within his reach, he effectually kept at bay the whole host of his enemies. On their part, missiles of every description were showered upon their adversary; knives were drawn, and even a musket levelled at his breast; nor is it easy to say what might have been the result of the affray, if a party of soldiers had

not promptly interfered, and seized upon Edward as their prisoner.

They conducted him towards the house of the governor, followed by the whole body of porters, and a large concourse of idle persons, whom the noise of the fray had drawn together. To these Edward was of course an object of hatred; he was a foreigner, which of itself was sufficient to secure for him the dislike of every patriotic Spaniard; and he had moreover knocked one of their countrymen into the water, an offence which the Spanish people could not possibly forgive. As to the provocation given, that was no object of enquiry with the mob; and had it even been known, it would have in no respect lessened the enormity of his guilt. The soldiers had therefore much difficulty in preserving Edward from the summary vengeance of the populace, who followed him with execrations, and occasionally saluted both him and his guard with showers of stones and filth. Of these many took effect upon the body of Edward; and certainly, had the mother who bore him looked at that instant upon her son, it is an even chance if she could have recognised him, so bruised and beaten was his

face, and disfigured with patches of mud; whilst his garments hung upon his back in perfect tatters, having suffered in a still greater degree than his countenance, in the scuffle which preceded the arrival of the military.

On his way to the house of the Alcaid, Edward was dragged beneath the doorway of his own abode. The noise of the crowd, their shouts and yells, had drawn Emily to the window, and looking out, she became a witness to the dreadful condition of her lover. His face besmeared with blood and filth; his hat gone; his linen torn, and his clothes rent; he was dragged, rather than led, by a party of grenadiers, along the street, whilst the fury of the populace, who hung upon his rear, threatened every instant to vent itself, in spite of the soldiers, in tearing his wounded body limb from limb. Edward looked up as he passed;—he tried to smile, and shouted as loud as he was able, "Fear not, love!" — but the sound of his voice died away upon her deafened ear — she gave one piercing shriek, and instantly disappeared from the window.

Edward heard her cry, and saw her sudden disappearance; and the sound, and the sight,

drove him almost to madness. He entreated his guards to release him, only for a moment, whilst he ran up stairs and comforted his wife. He besought a file of them to go with him, if they doubted his promise to return; but they were deaf to all his prayers, and hurrying forward with him towards the point whither they were going, the turning of a street soon shut the apartment from his view.

The Alcala, or mayor, of Fontarabia, was exactly such a person as the mayor of a small Spanish town usually is; proud, ignorant, and bigotted. He listened with apparent avidity to the complaints of the porters, who stated to him the hardship of having their bread taken out of their mouths by a foreigner and a heretic, and who demanded the most summary chastisement to be inflicted upon the prisoner, for the violent assault which he had made upon one of their number. It was in vain that Edward stated the whole facts of the case; that he dwelt upon his own poverty, and upon the obligation which he was under of doing something for the support of his wife, now near her confinement. It was in vain that he recapitulated all the insults which he had borne from his accusers;

and related the nature of the attack first made upon himself. The worthy magistrate was deaf to his arguments, in support of which, after all, no other evidence was adduced beyond his own individual assertion. Edward was accordingly pronounced guilty of a heinous misdemeanor; he was condemned to receive one hundred lashes upon the bare back, with a whip of cow-skin, and to be placed in the stocks for six hours, as a disturber of the public peace.

As soon as the sentence was passed, Edward assumed a different tone, and called upon the Alcala to beware how he violated the person of an English subject. "Though my dress and appearance be mean," continued he, "I hold some rank in my own country, and were the contrary the case, a British ambassador will at all times listen to the complaint of the poorest subject of his master. I warn you, Senor Alcala, to look well to what you do, for as sure as you inflict this degrading punishment upon me, so surely will a representation of the whole matter be forwarded to the British resident at the court of Madrid."

The mayor was startled at the tone of dignity in which the above was uttered, and evidently

hesitated for some moments, whether or not he should order Edward's sentence to be carried into execution; but his indecision was soon set aside, by the vehement gesticulations and outcries of an irritated mob. "Carracho, Coramba," and all sorts of other vulgar oaths, instantly issued from the heart of the crowd. "Will a Spanish magistrate be intimidated by the idle threatenings of a fellow like this, — of one who was probably banished from his own country for some heinous crime; who, when he first arrived, behaved to the noble Spanish people with all the insolence peculiar to these haughty islanders; and now seeks to take away the bread of honest men? Shame, shame on the coward who for one moment could weigh the bravadoes of such a one against the united wishes of his townsmen." These outcries, accompanied as they were with certain threats of vengeance, somewhat obscurely worded, determined the prudent magistate no longer to oppose the tide of popular fury; so he commanded Edward to be dragged to the public market-place, and then and there to undergo the punishment which had just been awarded him.

The culprit was instantly seized, and in spite

of a vigorous resistance, handcuffed by the guard. He was dragged to a square in the very heart of the town, and there his jacket and shirt were torn from his back, and himself fastened with ropes to the stone cross which stands in the middle of the area. The whole tale of blows was then inflicted upon him, with all the violence which personal hatred could create; and his feet being afterwards fastened in the stocks, he was left, bruised, wealed, and bloody, to endure with what equanimity he could command, the insolent jests and opprobrious epithets, heaped upon him by the triumphant populace.

CHAP. XXVI.

A RELEASE.

WILD with the consciousness of utter degradation, and smarting under the agony of the lashes which he had endured, Edward vainly struggled to release his arms from their manacles, and his legs from the state of confinement to which they were subjected. But his struggles were altogether unavailing; the thongs with which his arms were bound proved too strong for him to burst, whilst the stocks being stoutly padlocked over each ancle, bade defiance to the desperate pulling, which served no other purpose than to strip the skin from his own legs. The more vehemently he strove, likewise, to free himself, the louder were the shouts and laughter raised at his expence; till at last he clenched his teeth firmly together, and ceasing any longer to exert the strength which was exerted in vain, he waited in calm desperation the arrival of that moment which was to bring with it his release.

It came at length; though, whether from accident or design he cared not to enquire, five hours after the expiration of the six, during which his sentence had doomed him to confinement. As soon as his arms and legs were released, he rose, stiff and feeble; and without exhibiting any sign of anger, or uttering a single threat of vengeance, made directly towards his home. The sun had just gone down, and the shades of night were not yet beginning to supersede the twilight; when Edward, in a state of mind which beggars all description, arrived at the bottom of the stairs which led to his abode. The window through which Emily had gazed as he passed in the morning was still open; the door at the landing-place, which conducted to the outer apartment, or living-room, was ajar. He pushed it wide to the wall, and entered; but the room was empty. He called "Emily!"—but no one answered. He called again, not more loudly, for a vague horror, a fear of he knew not what, choaked his utterance. Still no sound reached him, except the echo of his own voice. The ashes upon the hearth shewed that a fire had that day been lighted, but that it had long died out. The

wooden table was covered with a clean cloth, the coffee-pot stood in the midst of it, and two cups and plates beside it. One chair was a little way pushed back towards the fire place; and the tea-kettle hung suspended from its hook over the embers, though the water which it contained was perfectly cold. All things, in short, looked as if Emily had prepared breakfast that morning, but had left the house without tasting it.

Breathless and trembling with terror, Edward now moved towards the door which led to the bed-chamber. It was closed; and his hand shook so, that for the space of several seconds he was unable to lift the latch. At length he raised it; he pushed the door open, and beheld Emily in bed. He sprang forward. She was cold and stiff, and in her dead arms she clasped a lifeless infant! From that instant, existence became to Edward, during many, many months, a perfect blank. Seasons went and fresh ones took their place, but he knew it not. Reason was driven from her seat, and Edward for the space of one entire year was a maniac. * * * * *

CHAP. XXVII.

RECAPITULATIONS.

Edward had been gone about an hour, when Emily left her bed, and set about preparing his morning meal with her usual alacrity. She still laboured, in no slight degree, under a feeling of uneasiness, both in mind and body; but she determined, for his sake, to support her spirits, and not to take away by her gloominess from the few happy moments which he could now enjoy. For the first time, too, during the whole of their guilty intercourse, she this day fell upon her knees, and poured out her heart before her Maker; and though she formed no resolution of quitting the society of her lover, though she never thought, indeed, of forming such a resolution, she nevertheless prayed that their sin might be forgiven, and that God would preserve them from a severer punishment than that which they already endured.

She had scarcely finished her prayer, when

the sound of an unusual bustle upon the street drew her hastily to the window. She gazed out, and beheld a crowd of people advancing, with one man in the midst of a guard of soldiers, who dragged him, as if he were a prisoner, rudely along the pavement. At the first glance her heart misgave her; she trembled all over, though as yet the cause of her apprehension was too far distant to permit her accurately to distinguish who the prisoner was. But what being is so quick-sighted as a loving female? Long before they had come beneath the window, she perceived too plainly that it was Edward whom the soldiers were dragging along; and as soon as she saw more accurately the miserable plight in which he was, her feelings wholly overpowered her. She uttered the loud shriek which Edward had heard, and falling backwards upon the floor she fainted.

On recovering her senses, she felt that the pains of labour were already upon her. She mustered strength sufficient, however, to crawl from one room into the other; and there, in a wretched hovel, alone, unfriended, and unnoticed, she gave birth to a male infant. The child was still born; and the mother thanked

God that it was so; for she could only rest its little head upon her bosom, when she expired.

Emily had died at ten o'clock in the morning; it was now seven o'clock at night, consequently her corpse was both cold and stiff. But to Edward she was still a thing of life, and loveliness, and delight: he gazed upon her with all the unmeaning vacancy of idiotcy; he twined her raven locks around his fingers, and talking and laughing, he conversed to her as if she were still alive, and they were together upon the banks of the Thames, in the sweet bower where their miseries first began.

He had continued thus to act for about two hours: the moon had risen, and threw her silver beams into the chamber of death, when a stranger entered, and advanced towards Edward. This was no other than the Spanish captain, who had given a passage in his vessel to Edward and Emily, when they crossed from England to Spain; he had been a witness to the trial and punishment of Edward, and having made enquiries into its cause, the whole truth immediately occurred to him. Edward had fallen into poverty, he had been endeavouring to earn a subsistence by manual labour, and the

jealousy of the Spanish workmen had brought this heavy disgrace upon him.

Captain Alvarez had executed several trips to England since the performance of the voyage which made the lovers his passengers. Among other places he had visited Sea-side; indeed, his vessel, which was the identical brig for assisting to unload whose cargo, Edward had been assailed by the Spaniards was just come in from that place; and there he had learned the full particulars of the lovers' melancholy story. Alvarez was a good man, and hence the tale made a deep impression upon him; he was far from excusing the crime of which the young people had been guilty; but they were known to him before he knew their misdeeds, and their extreme attachment to each other, as well as the gentleness and modesty of their deportment towards himself, had so firmly rooted them in the soil of his affections, that none of all the horrors which were afterwards communicated to him were capable of casting them out. He resolved, therefore, as soon as he should return to Spain, to make every enquiry after them; and should they still be within his reach,

to show them such attentions as his situation in life would permit.

No sooner was his vessel brought to her moorings, than he sallied forth in quest of the adventurers. He proceeded to the house which he had assisted them in hiring, and there learnt that they had shifted their quarters, and were now living, their former landlord believed, in extreme poverty in one of the dirtiest lanes in Fontarabia; to Fontarabia he accordingly returned, and he arrived time enough to learn that the stranger was on his trial before the Mayor, for having violently disturbed the peace of the town, and assaulted a liege subject of His Most Christian majesty the king of Spain. Alvarez reached the Alcalde's dwelling, only to hear the words of his sentence pronounced; nor was he possessed of sufficient influence either to soften or reverse it. One favour, however, he succeeded in obtaining for Edward, which was his tardy release at the time when it actually took place: for the Mayor had left the city immediately after the trial, on a visit to a friend at Irun, and it was pretended by the Prefect of Police, that strict orders were given

that the prisoner should not be set at liberty, except by a positive command from his superior.

Alvarez having distinctly heard his acquaintance sentenced to six hours' confinement in the stocks, waited, without making himself known to Edward, till these hours were expired; but finding that the Prefect still refused to set him free, he mounted a horse and rode off at full speed towards Irun, to obtain an order from the Mayor to that effect. To gain admission to the Alcala, however, he found almost as difficult a task as to persuade the Prefect to be just, for his honour was particularly engaged at a faro table, and could not be disturbed. At length, having remained at the door of the house till his patience would bear it no longer, he rushed in, and in the presence of a whole crowd of strangers made known his business. The Alcala of Fontarabia was overwhelmed, partly with indignation at the presumption of this sea-captain, and partly with terror, lest he might himself be involved in a scrape through the waywardness of his assistant; so he immediately wrote the necessary order, and delivered it to Alvarez, who lost no time in hurrying back with it to Fontarabia. When

he reached the market-place, however, he found that the captive had been already liberated, and he accordingly followed him to the miserable apartments which were pointed out as his lodgings.

On entering the chamber, Alvarez could not at first distinguish, by the feeble light of the moon, how circumstances really stood with Edward. He therefore advanced towards him, and held out his hand as to an old acquaintance; but of the extended hand Edward took no notice. His mind was a perfect chaos, — his ideas were disjointed and vague, — he talked on to Emily as if she were talking in turn to him, and left the kind-hearted intruder a prey to the most painful apprehensions.

Alvarez immediately perceived that some dreadful catastrophe had occurred; but the light of the moon was too faint to give a full view of its effects, though his heart at once whispered to him, of what nature these probably were. He instantly ran to a neighbouring house for a light, and having obtained it, returned to the abode of Edward. The latter was still in the same situation in which he had left him; with back and shoulders bare and

bloody; his face besmeared with mud, his hair dishevelled, with lightness in his heart, and madness in his brain. He was twisting round his finger some of the raven ringlets which flowed over the pale and waxen cheek of Emily; and talking to her all the while of love and joy, and hours and days of blessedness in store for them.

Alvarez was too deeply affected by the distressing spectacle, to make any foolish parade of sorrow. By means of the gentlest persuasions, he drew the maniac from beside the lifeless corse; and having caused him to be cleaned and his wounds dressed, he provided him with a suit of his own clothes, and removed him to his own home, some way distant from the town. As to Emily and her infant, since the superstitious prejudices of his countrymen would not grant to their bodies the privilege of being laid to eternal rest in consecrated ground, he dug for them a grave in one of the loveliest spots which the romantic vicinity of his cottage afforded, and railing it round, he placed a stone at its head, with this inscription, "The Stranger's Grave." In all probability it was because Emily's tombstone bore that simple epitaph,

that Edward selected it as the distinguishing mark of his own resting-place; at least such was the opinion of Mr. Townsend, as soon as he had read thus far, in the unfortunate young man's narrative.

CHAP. XXVIII.

RECOLLECTIONS.

When the light of reason again dawned upon the benighted mind of Edward, he found himself an inhabitant of a lonely cottage, erected in the very bosom of one of those romantic valleys with which the eastern Pyrenees abound. Immediately behind the house stood a tall perpendicular rock, of the height of perhaps three hundred feet, ending in an isolated cone, and sloping off on each side of the ridge till it united itself on the right and left to two lofty mountains. In the rear of that, again, rose the stupendous precipices of the Quatracone; whilst on each side of the vale, well-wooded and green hills sloped gently upwards, and in front the view was bounded wholly by the sea. To render the scene complete in beauty, a mountain stream tumbled from one of the shoulders of the rock first noticed, and brawling along the bottom of the valley, wound onwards, with a clear and delicious current, towards the ocean.

The cottage, of which, when he awoke from the dreary sleep of insanity, Edward found himself an inmate, was remarkable for its neatness. The furniture of the room in which he lay was plain, but clean and comfortable; the hangings of his tent-bed were of white dimity, and every thing throughout corresponded with them. It was on a lovely morning in June, just eighteen months after his first arrival in the country, that reason resumed her sway in the mind of Edward, as abruptly as she had abandoned it. He awoke from a deep sleep, collected and sensible; he gazed round him in utter perplexity and astonishment, nor could he, by any exertion of thought account, either for the novelty of his situation, or for his loneliness. Of the events which immediately preceded his insanity he retained not any correct or particular recollection: he remembered, indeed, that some dreadful scenes had passed before his eyes; but what they were, and whether they had been dreams or realities, he could not by any means determine.

Edward rose from his bed, and looked round the room, with the design of discovering something, of the absence of which he was conscious, though he could not tell very clearly

what it was. At length he remembered that Emily ought to have reposed beside him, and the recollection of that gradually recalled other images, and they were fearful ones, to his mind. Where was she? He had dreamt, for surely it was no more than a dream, that he found Emily a cold corpse, lying upon a miserable truckle-bed. Oh, it was all a vision of the night! — she could not be dead — she was somewhere, she had risen early, and he would ring and enquire for her.

He rang the bell, and a neat, good-looking female, of a complexion remarkably fair, imme-mediately appeared. Edward addressed her in English, and besought her to inform him where he was, and what had become of Emily. The woman's countenance brightened as he spoke, though there was a mixture of sorrow in the glance with which she gazed upon him; and she answered in the same tongue in which he had addressed her, that he was her guest, and her husband's, and that the lady concerning whom he had enquired was gone out.

"But she will return to breakfast? Which way did she go? — I will follow her if you will direct me."

"You had better remain where you are till I send my husband to you."

Edward nodded assent, and the woman disappeared. In a few minutes the door of his chamber was again opened, and a man stood before him, whom, after a little while spent in closely examining his countenance, he recognized to be the honest captain who had conveyed Emily and himself to Spain.

"Alvarez!" cried Edward, "how came you here? I am heartily glad to see you; but where am I, that you and I should meet in my bedroom? and who is the female that has just left me? She spoke, I think, in English; and yet are we not in Spain? — Where, too, is my wife?"

Alvarez (for it was himself) could with difficulty suppress his emotion, when he perceived his friend thus restored to the use of reason; and ignorant of the calamity which for so long a period had bereft him of that faculty. He informed him that the female concerning whom he enquired was his wife, and a countrywoman of Edward's, and that he, Edward, was for the present his guest. He then endeavoured to direct his attention to some other object, in

order to divert it from recurring to Emily, but this he found to be impossible.

"Alvarez," continued Edward, "you have not answered the question, to which more than all the rest I am desirous of receiving an answer. Where is my wife? Why are you silent, and why do you look so sad and melancholy? Surely I have not been dreaming all this while. Nay — speak out man, tell me the truth at once; is it all reality? Is Emily no more?"

Alvarez could not reply. Though a seaman, he was a man of acute feelings and tender heart, and the sight of Edward's growing agony completely unhinged him. "I see, I see, by your tears and by your manner, that it is too true. Have I then lived to look upon her lifeless corpse? Gracious heavens!" exclaimed he, wildly, as a light suddenly darted into his brain, "I remember it all now. The hovel in Fontarabia; my own insults and abuse; my return in the evening; and Emily, with her child, cold and lifeless upon the bed. Oh yes! Oh yes! it is all before my eyes, — and I have been wandering in thought, and did not recollect it sooner."

Alvarez trembled for the lately recovered reason of his friend; he took his arm, and leading him gently from the cottage, conducted him, unresisting and submissive, towards the bank of the stream. The air blew fresh and light upon his burning brow, and the sight and sounds of nature so completely overcame him, that he cast himself at length under a spreading cork-tree, and gave vent to his feelings in a passion of tears. These were the first drops which had moistened his cheeks, or relieved his dry and burning eye-balls, for upwards of a year. They now flowed freely and quickly, nor did Alvarez make any attempt to check them; he rather encouraged their flowing, and rejoiced at the prospect which it held out, of preventing a return of the most distressing of all the calamities by which frail humanity is liable to be assailed.

As soon as Edward had in some degree relieved the anguish of his bosom, and was able to bear a recurrence to the past, Alvarez gradually and carefully made him acquainted with the whole of the events which had befallen him. He told him of the state in which he had found him, of his having removed him to his own

home; but the information that he had been an inhabitant of that home during the space of twelve long months was received at first by Edward with a stare of incredulity. The mist which overshadowed his recollection Alvarez's account of Emily's fate had dispelled; every other circumstance, therefore, connected with it, recurred to his mind's eye with the same force and distinctness as if it had taken place only yesterday; nor could he for a long time be convinced that he had not just awoke from sleep, and that that sleep had taken up no greater share of time than the ordinary slumbers of the night. But when, at length, he was convinced of the truth of his friend's statement, he had no language capable of expressing his gratitude; a gratitude which the generous behaviour of the Spaniard fully merited, but to the expression of which that very generosity hindered him from deriving any satisfaction in listening.

It has been contended by many sage philosophers, that time is a nonentity; that it is in reality nothing more than a succession of ideas. Perhaps this theory is correct; but if it be, it would puzzle those who hold it to account for the change which now exhibited itself in

Edward's deportment. Through his mind no ideas had passed, of which at least he could recall the recollection, for the extended period of twelve months. The last which left its trace behind, and the first which again presented itself were the same; and yet their effects were widely different. In the former case, immediate derangement of intellect was the result; in the latter, only a deep, but a quiet sorrow, which, though it promised to undermine the stability of his bodily constitution, left the intellectual powers uninjured. Edward, in short, became from the day of his first recovery a silent, dejected, heartbroken-looking person; but the wildness of despair was gone, and reason no longer tottered upon her throne.

After the lapse of several days, he had so far given proof of the settled habits of his mind, that Alvarez consented, even readily, to conduct him to the resting place of Emily. It was a small spot of green turf, surrounded by a high iron railing, embosomed amid hanging woods and rocks, and at no great distance from the bed of the water-fall. A couple of wild rose-bushes were planted within the railing, and a tall acacia bent its beautiful branches over

the whole. A plain slab of white marble told that this was the grave of strangers, and the cross of stone which stood at the other end of the grassy mound demanded from the lonely wanderer who might visit the spot, a passing prayer for the repose of their spirits.

It cannot be said, that Edward's feelings, when he beheld the romantic grave of her whom he had loved so much, were altogether agonizing. His tears flowed abundantly upon the senseless earth, but there was no bursting of the heart, no throbbing of the brain; his emotions were tenderly melancholy, rather than boisterously painful, and he was even pleased by beholding the respect with which her mortal remains had been treated. He returned, therefore, with his friend, more than ever grateful for his kindnesses, and anxious, as far as possible, to avoid giving unnecessary pain, by too great an exhibition of his own sorrows.

Among other past events, which gradually, though clearly, presented themselves to his memory, Edward's visit to the grave of Emily called back the substance of that melancholy conversation which had passed between her and himself, on the rock overhanging the sea,

the night previous to her decease. Edward remembered distinctly the solemnity of the tone in which she had predicted her own speedy dissolution. He remembered, too, the unusual degree of superstitious terror to which his own mind had given way; and the promises which he had solemnly given of abstaining from the commission of suicide, and of returning once more to his country and his kindred. The latter of these promises he began now to think of fulfilling. To a breach of the first he felt no temptation, for despair had died away, and sincere sorrow and repentance had risen in its place; but the last, though equally sacred with it, could not be discharged without many personal sacrifices. It is true that he was anxious to obtain some information respecting the condition of his relatives, and the manner in which they had borne up against the shame of his flight; it is true, that in his heart there were frequent yearnings of natural affection,—wishes, rather than hopes, of being forgiven and received back again, like the prodigal son in the Gospel, by the father, "against Heaven, and before whom he had sinned;" but these were at least balanced by the reluctance which he felt to

abandon the spot of earth in which the remains of Emily slumbered, and where he hoped, that if he could abide where he was but a little while longer, his own might rest beside them. Delicacy, however, forbade that he should continue longer to oppress a stranger, who had already, for so extended a period, been oppressed by his presence; and this, combining with an irresistible desire to see his relatives, though he might not be seen by them, at length determined him to make a visit to England, even if he should again return and end his days among the Pyrenees.

CHAP. XXIX.

A RETURN.

Having formed this resolution, he lost no time in making it known to his kind host and hostess. By these his resolution was highly applauded; and Alvarez even urged him to go at once, and throw himself upon the mercy of his relatives, who, he doubted not, would receive him with open arms, and strive, as far as in them lay, to heal the wounds with which his heart was lacerated. He added, that as soon as his ship had taken in a cargo, he was himself about to make a voyage to London, and that he would gladly carry Edward as his passenger, though he could not promise to accompany him beyond the British metropolis. To this offer Edward thankfully and joyfully acceded, and accordingly prepared to return to the land of his nativity, with a mind oppressed with feelings so multitudinous and varied, as to put it out of the reach of language even imperfectly to describe them.

A full fortnight elapsed after the above ar-

rangements were made, before Alvarez's ship was ready to put to sea, and during the progress of that fortnight, Edward, as may be supposed, spent by far the greater portion of his time beside the grave of Emily. On these occasions his sole companion was Flora; and the gentle animal, by her faithful adherence to him in joy and sorrow, but still more by her apparent satisfaction in being permitted to accompany him to the romantic grave of his ill-fated mistress, attached herself to him by a tie little less powerful, than if she had really possessed those sentiments of commiseration and deep feeling with which his still warm imagination delighted to clothe her. But pleased as he was by discovering that his dog had been the companion of his lonely hours, and had watched with her wonted fidelity beside the bed of her maniac master, he was not less delighted to find that the locket which contained a single ringlet of Emily's raven hair had not been removed from his bosom. That ringlet she had given to him at his own request, in the earlier days of their intimacy, whilst yet their minds were unpolluted by guilt, and their hearts beat with an affection which they deemed as pure as it was ardent.

He had it immediately enclosed in a glass case, and suspended it by a ribbon round his neck; and there it hung, next the skin of his bosom, by night and by day, from the moment of its being first suspended there till it was laid along with himself in the grave.

At length the day arrived which was fixed for the departure of the friends. Almost the whole of the preceding night was spent by Edward upon Emily's grave; and now, having bid a warm and affectionate farewell to his kind-hearted countrywoman, who lamented his departure with as many tears as if he had been her own brother, he proceeded with Alvarez to the harbour of Fontarabia, and embarked. Their voyage, though tedious, was on the whole agreeable; but during its performance, much of his original fierceness of temper came back upon Edward. He did not, indeed, relapse into that desperate state of mind in which he was sunk previous to his flight with Emily; far less was he driven to madness, as had been the case when he beheld her a lifeless lump of clay before him; but he was restless and uneasy; and the nearer they approached to the conclusion of their voyage, the more restless

and uneasy he became. The strangest superstitions, too, seemed to have taken possession of his once vigorous mind. Sometimes he determined to proceed at once to the rectory, and throwing himself on his knees before his parents, implore their forgiveness; at other times, he determined to journey to Preston in disguise, and having ascertained in what spirits and condition his family was, and stolen one secret glance at each of its members, to quit the country immediately, and never revisit it more. Whilst the former resolution remained uppermost in his thoughts, he would form a thousand strange surmises as to the probable nature of the reception which he might expect; and even in determining the chances of happiness or misery to his relatives, it was no unusual thing for him to adopt the most extraordinary course. He would sit upon the tafferel of the ship, and watch the waves as they rolled leisurely on towards its side. If a particular wave, upon which his eye chanced to fix, reached the ship's side without breaking into white foam, then the hope, that all might be at the rectory as he wished it, gained strength and security; if otherwise, and the billow separated before it

attained the point which he desired it to attain, hope instantly expired, and he anticipated the most horrible events.

At length the ship began to enter the Thames, and made her way up that noble river with all the speed which a fair wind and tide could communicate. Already she had passed Gravesend, when Edward ascended the deck, and St. Paul's, with all the towers and spires of London, rose upon his view. What where then his feelings? They were strange, wild, and tumultuous; but the bustle into which all hands were soon thrown prevented their being noticed by others, or even exerting their full influence over himself. In two hours more the ship was moored beside the wharf, and Edward, having tenderly embraced Alvarez, and taken with him his dog, and such apparel and money as the latter compelled him to accept, stepped into a little boat, and was speedily wafted to a quiet street which turns off from the Strand, and leads down towards the river. Here, in a comfortable hotel, he for the present fixed himself, and remained there till such clothes could be procured as suited his station in life, and would permit him to appear in public.

As soon as he was able to go forth, the first enquiry which Edward made was into the fate of Major Campbell, and the state of his own affairs. From the agents of the regiment he learned, that the gallant veteran was no more; and by comparing dates he soon discovered that Campbell had been seized with an inflammatory fever immediately after his own departure, from which he never recovered. His death too was so sudden, that he had been able only to appoint the gentleman, to whom Edward was now conversing, agent for a Lieutenant Stanley, who was somewhere abroad; but of whose death little doubt could be entertained, as no intelligence respecting him had been received by any one for upwards of a year and a half. This information, whilst it greatly shocked Edward, relieved him at the same time from the idea that Campbell had proved treacherous; and whilst he mourned the loss of an old and tried friend by death, he could not help confessing to himself, that he would rather the case were as it was, than that his first suspicions had been confirmed. Edward next proceeded to convince the agent, that he was the identical Mr. Stanley, of whose interests Major

Campbell had appointed the house of Careful and Co. guardians, which having with some difficulty accomplished, he had the satisfaction to find, that besides a pretty considerable sum, procured in the shape of difference in an exchange from full to half pay, there were in the agent's hands large arrears of monies due on account of service, as well as a legacy of a thousand pounds, which had been left to him by Major Campbell. In a pecüniary point of view, therefore, Edward was now very comfortable, nor did he lose a moment in reimbursing the generous Spaniard for the expences to which he had been put on his account; and leaving still a considerable sum in the agent's custody, he took with him sufficient to defray all expences by the way, and prepared to set out immediately, for Preston rectory.

It were impossible to describe the state of Edward's mind, as he proceeded from the office of his agent towards that of the Preston stage-coach, for the purpose of securing a place in it against the morrow. The crowds which passed him, all speaking in his native language; the appearance of the buildings, the streets, the carriages; every thing, in short, so familiar, and at the

same time so new, produced the effect of almost convincing him that the past was no other than a dream; and a dream, for awakening from which he could not be sufficiently thankful. Certain it is, that he walked on, with feelings calm and moderate. Anticipations of evil, and remembrances of sorrow, alike gave way before the sort of haze, or confusion of ideas, to which he unconsciously became subject; and it was not without a considerable degree of mental exertion that he so far recovered his self-command, as to give to the book-keeper a feigned name instead of his own, which trembled upon his tongue, in answer to the question, "What name, sir, shall I put down?"

But his return to the inn brought back with it all the cares which a walk in the Strand had for a while dissipated; indeed, a glance at his own figure in the glass gave proof enough, that a disease more deadly than troubled dreams had preyed upon his vitals. He absolutely started, at beholding the ghastly visage, and faded form which that glance presented. His temples and forehead which were wont to be covered with bushy hair, had become perfectly bald; his cheekbones and eyebrows pro-

truded over the sunken eyes so much, as almost to conceal them; whilst the sharpened nose and enlarged mouth were of themselves disguise sufficient, without again laying him under the necessity of providing a wig or patch to hinder his being recognised. Even the very tone of his voice had, he was conscious, undergone a change; it was now deep and hollow, instead of being clear and strong as it once was. — In a word, he might go with safety any where, except where the eye of a very near relative should fall upon him, without running the smallest risk of detection; so thoroughly had grief and remorse altered his appearance, and eaten out his beauty. Edward felt no pain at this; he rejoiced, rather, at beholding it, on two accounts: for first, it would facilitate the execution of a plan which he had at length determined to pursue; and secondly, it gave tolerably sure evidence, that the burthen of life could not very long oppress him, or the grave very long refuse to him the quiet of its repose.

CHAP. XXX.

HOME.

NEXT morning Edward was seated upon the coach, and a few hours travelling brought him to the town of Preston. Here he alighted, and walked into the inn, determined, in the first place, to make some enquiries into the situation of the family at the rectory, before he should venture to take any other step, far less trust himself in their presence. He was pleased to find that no one recognised him: persons, whose faces and names were to him perfectly familiar, addressed him as a stranger; and when he rang for the landlord, he appeared in total ignorance of who it was that desired to converse with him.

When he entered the room where Edward was standing, the latter half turned towards the window, for the purpose of more effectually hindering a recognition, and was on the point of commencing his enquiries, when he was stopped by a slow tolling of the great bell of the church.

No hour was striking,—besides, the sound of the bell which struck the hours was very different from this. It must be a funeral, and his heart sank within him as he abruptly demanded of the landlord, who was dead.

"The father of his parish, sir," replied the man, "our excellent rector."

Edward staggered towards the wall, and grasped the window-shutter to save himself from falling; and the landlord, imagining that he was seized with a sudden fainting fit, ran towards him with a tumbler of water, to dash it in his face. But Edward motioned with his hand for him to desist; and summoning to his aid all the firmness which despair could communicate, proceeded to enquire into the circumstances which attended his father's decease.

"Why, sir," replied the landlord, "it is a long story, and a sad one. The Rector had a son, who was the pride of his heart, and a wild good-for-nothing scape-grace he was all his days. Nothing would serve this young man, but he must needs fall in love with his own niece, a very pretty madcap of a Scotch girl, who resided at the rectory. So you see, sir, they could not marry; and what does my young

gentleman do, but run away with her, over the seas, to some foreign country. — Well, the Rector never got over it:—it is some eighteen or nineteen months since the young man ran away, and he has never been seen to smile since, except once, and that was at Miss Margaret's wedding. She was a good girl that, all her days, though her parents neglected her somewhat, for the sake of her brother. But she has been their stay and support in their affliction; and without her, God knows what they would have done; particularly Mrs. Stanley, poor woman, in her melancholy condition."

"Why, what has befallen her?" asked Edward, with that sullen calmness which despair frequently produces.

"She is out of her mind, poor lady! and has been these twelve months past. She never got over her son's behaviour, any more than the doctor, though what brought him to the grave has only turned her brain. And yet I think he is the best off of the two; don't you think so, sir?"

"I do indeed," replied Edward. "But you said Margaret was married; whom then did she marry?"

" She married Mr. Greenwood, he that used to be Mr. Edward's companion at school and college, and who has now got the living of Staplehurst. She was married about six weeks ago, at the earnest request of her father, who fancied himself then dying, and was anxious to see her settled, and a home provided for his wife, before he should leave the world. God rest his soul, good man! he will be long missed by his people, who are not likely soon to meet his match again."

Edward had heard enough, and now motioned to the landlord to leave him. He took but one turn through the room, and then abruptly seizing his hat, directed his steps towards the rectory. The last gleam of hope which had hitherto enlivened his mind, was totally extinguished; and he experienced only that recklessness of every thing, even of appearances themselves which invariably follows its extinction. As he drew near the house, he beheld the funeral procession issue slowly from the door. He stopped to watch it. It proceeded by the garden, through the very wicket at which Emily had stolen out to meet him, on that fatal night. It passed on with all the pomp and deliberation

which suited the occasion. Crowds of the lower orders of people filled the church-yard, and the voice of sorrow and lamentation rose in melancholy cadence from amongst them.

With tearless eyes Edward watched the procession as it went on, till the last of the train had entered the church. He dared not approach nearer, fearful lest the presence of his murderer might disturb the good man's rest; but moving on towards the front entrance of the rectory, he pushed it open, and entered the hall. Here all things stood in the order in which they were wont to stand from the earliest moment of his recollection. Dr. Stanley's hat hung upon a peg on the wall, and the coagulation of dust with which it was covered proved that it had not been worn for many days before; his gold-headed cane stood, as it used to stand, in a corner near the door; his gloves lay upon a table, and beside them was a foraging cap of Edward's own, which was clean and neat, as if some one had taken the trouble to brush it every morning. All these things Edward noted at his leisure, and without being disturbed; for his footstep was unregarded, and he almost believed that the house was desolate.

Full of this idea, he approached the door of the dining-room, with the intention of stealing one last look at the portraits of those parents, whom he never again should behold upon earth. He hastily opened the door, when Flora, who accompanied him, darted into the room, and wagged her tail. This was instantly followed by a shriek, uttered in the voice of his sister. — "My brother's dog! O where is my brother himself?"

"I am here, Margaret," cried he, rushing in and presenting himself before her; "behold the wretch whom you have called your brother, but who is unworthy of that title, or any other which carries with it endearment or affection."

Margaret looked at him for some moments, as if unable to believe her eyes. "Edward!" she at length exclaimed, "is it you whom I behold, or is it your spirit?" Oh, you have come at a melancholy time!"

"I know it, Margaret; I know all that has occurred. I know that my father is at rest, and that my mother — Oh! why do I breathe that word, which is only polluted by my utterance?"

"Oh Edward!" cried Margaret, advancing to throw herself into his arms, "you have sinned, and

sinned grievously; but you are still my brother; and I can forgive you, even as he forgave you who is now far beyond the reach of human evils."

"Pollute not yourself," exclaimed Edward, wildly, "by embracing a thing like me. Stand off, and tell me whether my father cursed me ere he died; that the curse may light upon my brain at once, and burn it to tinder."

"Curse you, Edward! oh no! he never cursed any one in his life, and least of all you. He forgave you, I tell you, — he prayed day and night, that God would forgive you, and lead you back to repentance and reformation. But where is — I cannot breathe her name — I mean the partner of your guilt?"

"She is where I, I trust, shall shortly be."

"Is she too dead? Death has been busy amongst us."

"And will be more so, I hope, before long. But where is my mother?"

"She is with me, and as comfortable as circumstances can make her."

The conversation had proceeded thus far, when Edward, looking through the window, saw the crowd beginning to disperse, and guessed that the funeral was over. He would not wait

the return of the mourners, but starting upon his feet, rushed towards Margaret, and imprinted a kiss upon her cheek. "Margaret," cried he, "farewell! You shall see me, probably hear of me no more; but of this rest assured, that I am penitent; and that, as I thank you for the communication which you have just made, so will I pray with my latest breath for blessings upon you and yours. And now I am alone again."

"Stay, stay, Edward, dear Edward!" exclaimed Margaret, as she vainly endeavoured to retard his progress; but her efforts and her entreaties were equally unavailing — he fled from the house. That night a dog resembling Flora was recognised by Dr. Stanley's faithful old servant James, issuing from the part of the church where the Doctor had been buried, and he thought he could perceive the figure of a man, a little way in front of it. But neither dog nor master were ever seen in that part of the country again. Edward hurried up to London as fast as a post-chaise and four could carry him, and throwing himself into a coach, which was going, he knew not whither, he did not recover any degree of self-command, till he

found himself in an inn at Carlisle. He was now far enough removed from the scenes of his youth: to return into Spain he felt an insuperable objection, for which he sought not to account; and having heard accidentally of the romantic situation of Wetheral, he proceeded thither at random, and now sleeps as soundly in its lonely church-yard, as if his grave were the tomb of the Capulets.

No motion has he now, no force;
He neither hears nor sees;
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
With stocks, and stones, and trees.

Reader, I have told thee a tale of no ordinary woe, but it has a moral in it. Whatever thou mayest be, or however situated, guard well the first avenues which lead to sin; for if one false step be taken, thou canst not tell of how many evils it may prove the prelude.

CONCLUSION.

THOUGH my narrative relates comparatively but little to the affairs of Mr. Townsend's family,

yet it may not be amiss to state, that for some time after the death of Stanley, Elizabeth's health and spirits were such, as to furnish but slender hopes that she would long survive him. A tender father, however, would not suffer his child to drop into the grave, without making every possible effort to save her. A curate was therefore put into the vicarage-house, and Mr. Townsend, accompanied by his two daughters, departed upon their travels. The mind of the invalid was thus kept from brooding over the past; she was enlivened by new scenes and new faces being continually brought before her, till at length all trace of her unfortunate passion disappeared, and in less than a year she was herself again. She afterwards married a very respectable man, a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, and sent various little grandchildren to visit Mr. Townsend at Wetheral, and to sport upon the banks of the same river which had witnessed their mother's childish frolics.

THE END.

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